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Thursday, December 11, 2014

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART
SEE WHAT'S NEW... CHECK OUT OUR LATEST OFFER ON PAGE 28

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NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Intel from torture still OK, say Tories

The federal Conservatives say they don't condone torture, but they will still use intelligence derived from it PAGE 18

METRO SHOWS YOU EVERY TRICK IN THE BOOK

IF YOU SPENT TOO MUCH OF 2014 WATCHING TV AND NOT ENOUGH READING, OUR ANNUAL CHEAT SHEET WILL HELP YOU FEEL LIKE THE BIGGEST BOOKWORM AT YOUR HOLIDAY PARTY PAGE 25

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Is city Ripe for picking?

Transportation.
Luxury sedan company fighting to enter Vancouver market

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

Taxis and limousines are the only options for Vancouverites looking to hire a ride in the city, but not if a new local company called Ripe gets its way.

Ripe is trying to convince the Passenger Transportation Branch to grant it 20 licences, to create a luxury sedan transportation service for one-way trips that passengers can book with their smartphones.

The service will be pricier than a taxi — Ripe plans to charge a base fee of $15 — and cheaper than a limo, which legally must charge $75 for one hour even if it only drives two metres.

Thursday is the final day of Ripe's four-day hearing with the branch, which allowed taxi companies to cross-examine the fledgling company. A decision on its future is expected by early January.

It's the second time the company has applied in an attempt to serve Vancouver's growing tech sector and the professionals who would gladly fork over extra cash for a premium ride instead of waiting in the rain trying to flag down a cab.

"We see this in cities all over the world," Ripe founder Otis Perrick said. "We're trying to bring Vancouver the transportation options it deserves."

But Perrick has a steep hill to climb.

The branch has not issued a new taxi licence in Vancouver since 2007 — aside from temporary licences to help empty downtown's entertainment district on Friday and Saturday nights.

Ripe's application coincides with U.S.-based ride service Uber's plans to re-enter the province. The Vancouver Taxi Association reviles Uber, which presents itself as a tech company since drivers and passengers connect via smartphones, and has asked the court for an injunction to stop it.

The taxi industry, which made large donations to Vision Vancouver in the November election, is also opposed to Ripe.

"They're very resistant to change; they're not embracing what's around them," Perrick said.

Yet Perrick is adamant that Ripe is a local transportation company, not a tech company.

"This is not just some rogue company bullying its way in. This is a local company concerned about transportation options," Perrick said.

His business proposes to pay its drivers a monthly salary of $2,000 plus commission and follow all provincial safety standards and regulations.

BACK INTO THE SWING OF THINGS

A group of people dressed as tennis players pose for a photo under the archway during the 2014 Pemberton Music Festival. HUKA Entertainment announced Wednesday that the festival is returning to B.C. next summer from July 16 to 19. Story, page 10.

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO FILE

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NEWS

'Legacy.'
Mayor aims to name street after Pat Quinn

Mayor Gregor Robertson wants to honour the late Pat Quinn's legacy by naming a street after the beloved Canucks coach and player.

The mayor wants staff to consider renaming the segment of Abbott Street beside Rogers Arena after Quinn, according to a motion he will bring to council next week.

If that option doesn't work, Robertson will ask his staff to work with Quinn's family to identify another appropriate place or civic asset to name after Quinn, who passed away last month after battling a lengthy illness.

"Vancouver city council is tremendously grateful for Pat Quinn's outstanding work to shape, build and enhance our city's dynamic hockey culture, and his support for our emerging young athletes," Robertson wrote in his motion.

The tribute will be welcome in the hockey community, with Vancouver Giants majority owner Ron Toigo suggesting such a tribute last week.

"I think if they named a street after him, that would probably be the best thing, because he was more than hockey. He was all about the city of Vancouver, no matter where he was in the world," Toigo told Metro.

"He saved hockey in this city," Toigo said. "He got people back into it.

"His legacy will carry on forever."

EMILY JACKSON/METRO
WITH FILES FROM CAM TUCKER

A SkyTrain moves across Vancouver's skyline. Environmentalists, businesses, unions and tourism groups have banded together in a coalition to push for a "yes" vote in the province's upcoming referendum on transit funding. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO FILE

Coalition to push for 'yes' vote in transit referendum

'Significant moment.'
Environmentalists, businesses, unions and tourism groups band together to support mayors' 10-year plan

MATT KIELTYKA
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A group of influential organizations has joined forces and vowed to support a "yes" vote in next year's referendum on transit funding.

The Vancouver Board of Trade, David Suzuki Foundation, Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association, Unifor Local 111, Tourism Vancouver, Greater Vancouver Gateway Council and the B.C. Chamber of Commerce announced on Wednesday they have formed the Better Transit and Transportation Coalition.

"This is a significant moment in time where Metro residents and business can decide between a strong economy and job creation or more congestion and less service," said John Winter, CEO of the B.C. Chamber of Commerce, in a statement.

The group, which expects its ranks to further swell over time, said it supports the 10-year, $7.5-billion transit plan that the region's mayors have laid out.

That plan includes a subway line along Broadway in Vancouver, light rapid transit in Surrey and expanded bus service throughout the region.

However, that plan is contingent on securing new sources of revenue that will be put to a vote in a provincially mandated referendum next year.

"With a million more people moving to the Lower Mainland, investing in a better transit and transportation network is one of the most crucial decisions the region can make to build healthier communities and improve quality of life," said Ian Bruce, science and policy manager at the David Suzuki Foundation.

The Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation meet Thursday, where they are expected to announce how they intend to pay for their share of the plan and finalize a referendum question, which will then require approval from the provincial government.

According to a Globe and Mail report earlier this week, the mayors favour a regional increase of the Provincial Sales Tax of 0.5 per cent.

Other possible funding options floated by mayors have included increasing the existing B.C. carbon tax and an annual vehicle registration fee.

Swatting. Teen charged with sending false alarms

Mounties have charged a 17-year-old British Columbia boy with extortion and public mischief over allegations his fake emergencies set off an intense response by police in Florida.

The teen is in custody and accused by the Polk County sheriff's office in central Florida's Fort Meade of "swatting," or calling in a fake emergency to police and watching the large response.

The county sheriff's department says it suspects the same person called a high school to say he'd shoot everyone there and then sent an email saying he'd blow everyone up.

In a third incident, a caller told a police dispatcher he was in a Florida home, had just killed his parents, and would shoot any officer who arrived.

RCMP say the same teen, whose identity is protected, has pleaded guilty to criminal harassment in 2012 involving two incidents where he harassed young women he met online.

A Polk County news release says police in Canada seized a computer from the teen's home in Coquitlam and that he's a suspect in other cases in Canada and the United States.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Foster care. B.C.'s child advocate urges new class

B.C.'s children's advocate is calling for a new class of foster care that would involve the families of the province's neediest children.

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond says in a report that guardianship of children with complex medical, psychological and developmental needs should be shared between their family and the government.

She says children requiring the most intervention are often placed in inappropriate group homes where their needs aren't met.

Turpel-Lafond cited an example of a troubled teen who was placed in a home staffed by a man hired from a line at a coffee shop and allegedly sexually abused the boy for six months.

She says it's been nearly two years since she recommended that the Children's Ministry address serious gaps in the system, but there's been no significant progress.

Children's Minister Stephanie Cadieux says the report does not reflect the ministry's most recent work and that Turpel-Lafond's three-month timeline for implementing the recommendations is unrealistic.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"We don't have a model of care. We have an ad hoc kind of auction system, where people say I have X kid, where can we send X kid, do we have a satellite home somewhere?"

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, B.C.'s child advocate on the need for changes to the province's residential-care program

Santa hands out presents to families on board Air Transat and the Children's Wish Foundation's special mission to the North Pole on Wednesday. THANDI FLETCHER/METRO

Kids take flight to find Mr. Claus

Children's Wish Foundation. North Pole mission to find Santa turns up some joy

Before six-year-old Tod Tuvshinzaya could board a flight to the North Pole in search of Santa Claus on Wednesday, he first had some jitters to overcome.

"It's so shaky!" the young Vancouver boy said, describing his last experience on what was clearly a turbulent flight.

But as soon as Tod spotted Santa at the front of the airplane, his eyes lit up like a Christmas tree, and his nerves were quickly forgotten.

Tod was one of about 80 children who, along with family members, departed from Vancouver International Airport on Wednesday for a 90-minute Air Transat and Children's Wish Foundation flight to the North Pole.

Their mission? To find Santa and bring him back to Vancouver.

Despite some hurdles, including a grouchy Grinch blocking the plane's takeoff, the children quickly tracked down the man in the red suit.

Santa magically appeared in the cabin, handing out Christmas stockings filled with goodies for all the children.

Seeing the delight on Tod's face was a special moment for mom Salongo Gantulga, especially considering the difficult start her son had in life.

Ten days after he was born, Tod was rushed to B.C. Children's Hospital with complications from a congenital heart defect.

He spent the next few months undergoing multiple surgeries as doctors tried to repair his heart, eventually giving him a pacemaker.

Although Tod no longer has serious heart problems, Gantulga said he does have permanent hearing loss and a mild intellectual disability.

Earlier this year, the Children's Wish Foundation granted Tod and his family his wish to celebrate his sixth birthday at Disney World.

"If you could look at his eyes on that day, it was amazing," she said.

For Air Transat flight attendant Henry Estevez, Wednesday's flight transported him back to his childhood years.

"Just looking at these little faces, they're just waiting for Santa to come up," he said. "Every single flight that we do like this one, it's a reward."

THANDI FLETCHER/METRO

moto x

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Spoonful of Poppins at Arts Club

On stage. Mary Poppins is at Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage until Jan. 4

BACKSTAGE PASS
Graeme McRanor
vancouver@metronews.ca

If you aren't familiar with musicals or the writings of P.L. Travers, you might be inclined to think that Mary Poppins is the name of a fledgling, all-female pop/rock dance troupe.

However, in this instance we are of course referring to the series of children's books written in the 1930s that featured a magical English nanny and her very lofty umbrella.

Julie Andrews mainstreamed the character in a Disney musical in 1964.

The film received plenty of critical acclaim (as did Andrews), but word is Travers disliked it so much that she resisted selling the rights to the musical for years.

It finally premiered in London in 2004 (the first book of the series came out in 1934).

The Arts Club mounted a version (based on books and the film) last year and the main cast returns for this year's production, including Sara-Jeanne Hosie in the title role.

Hosie, of course, is an Arts Club regular who's landed roles in many of the theatre's most popular musicals, including Swing, Cabaret, Beauty and the Beast, and A Closer Walk with Patsy Cline.

Mary Poppins is at the Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage until Jan. 4. Tickets start at $29. More information at ArtsClub.com.

Around the city

- **Antarctica: A Year on Ice.** Few people go to Antarctica. Even fewer stay as long as Anthony Powell and his wife Christine. Antarctica: A Year on Ice provides an interesting looks at a very isolated, unique tribe of humans. This film is getting a lot of buzz for its spectacular visuals, human perspective and informative content. Watch it from Dec. 5-8, 11-13, 20-24, and Jan. 5 at the VIFF Vancity Theatre. More information at VIFF.org.
- **An East Van Panto.** Theatre Replacement's East Van Panto rides again at the York Theatre this month (until Dec. 28) with a way-beyond retelling of Disney's Cinderella. Written by Charles Demers, music by Veda Hille and directed by Amiel Gladstone. More info at TheCultch.com.

Scott Walters and Sara-Jeanne Hosie star in the 2013 production of Mary Poppins, which returns to the Stanley Industrial Stage until Jan. 4, 2015. DAVID COOPER/ARTS CLUB

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2AD, 2AE, 2AF, 2AG, 2AH, 2AJ, 2AK, 2AL, 2AM, 2AN, 2AP, 2AR, 2AS, 2AT, 2AU, 2AV, 2AW, 2AX, 2AY, 2AZ, 2BA, 2BB, 2BC, 2BD, 2BE, 2BF, 2BG, 2BH, 2BJ, 2BK, 2BL, 2BM, 2BN, 2BP, 2BR, 2BS, 2BT, 2BU, 2BV, 2BW, 2BX, 2BY, 2BZ, 2CA, 2CB, 2CC, 2CD, 2CE, 2CF, 2CG, 2CH, 2CJ, 2CK, 2CL, 2CM, 2CN, 2CP, 2CR, 2CS, 2CT, 2CU, 2CV, 2CW, 2CX, 2CY, 2CZ, 2DA, 2DB, 2DC, 2DD, 2DE, 2DF, 2DG, 2DH, 2DJ, 2DK, 2DL, 2DM, 2DN, 2DP, 2DR, 2DS, 2DT, 2DU, 2DV, 2DW, 2DX, 2DY, 2DZ, 2EA, 2EB, 2EC, 2ED, 2EE, 2EF, 2EG, 2EH, 2EJ, 2EK, 2EL, 2EM, 2EN, 2EP, 2ER, 2ES, 2ET, 2EU, 2EV, 2EW, 2EX, 2EY, 2EZ, 2FA, 2FB, 2FC, 2FD, 2FE, 2FF, 2FG, 2FH, 2FJ, 2FK, 2FL, 2FM, 2FN, 2FP, 2FR, 2FS, 2FT, 2FU, 2FV, 2FW, 2FX, 2FY, 2FZ, 2GA, 2GB, 2GC, 2GD, 2GE, 2GF, 2GG, 2GH, 2GJ, 2GK, 2GL, 2GM, 2GN, 2GP, 2GR, 2GS, 2GT, 2GU, 2GV, 2GW, 2GX, 2GY, 2GZ, 2HA, 2HB, 2HC, 2HD, 2HE, 2HF, 2HG, 2HH, 2HJ, 2HK, 2HL, 2HM, 2HN, 2HP, 2HR, 2HS, 2HT, 2HU, 2HV, 2HW, 2HX, 2HY, 2HZ, 2JA, 2JB, 2JC, 2JD, 2JE, 2JF, 2JG, 2JH, 2JJ, 2JK, 2JL, 2JM, 2JN, 2JP, 2JR, 2JS, 2JT, 2JU, 2JV, 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2UN, 2UP, 2UR, 2US, 2UT, 2UU, 2UV, 2UW, 2UX, 2UY, 2UZ, 2VA, 2VB, 2VC, 2VD, 2VE, 2VF, 2VG, 2VH, 2VJ, 2VK, 2VL, 2VM, 2VN, 2VP, 2VR, 2VS, 2VT, 2VU, 2VV, 2VW, 2VX, 2VY, 2VZ, 2WA, 2WB, 2WC, 2WD, 2WE, 2WF, 2WG, 2WH, 2WJ, 2WK, 2WL, 2WM, 2WN, 2WP, 2WR, 2WS, 2WT, 2WU, 2WV, 2WW, 2WX, 2WY, 2WZ, 2XA, 2XB, 2XC, 2XD, 2XE, 2XF, 2XG, 2XH, 2XJ, 2XK, 2XL, 2XM, 2XN, 2XP, 2XR, 2XS, 2XT, 2XU, 2XV, 2XW, 2XX, 2XY, 2XZ, 2YA, 2YB, 2YC, 2YD, 2YE, 2YF, 2YG, 2YH, 2YJ, 2YK, 2YL, 2YM, 2YN, 2YP, 2YR, 2YS, 2YT, 2YU, 2YV, 2YW, 2YX, 2YY, 2YZ, 2ZA, 2ZB, 2ZC, 2ZD, 2ZE, 2ZF, 2ZG, 2ZH, 2ZJ, 2ZK, 2ZL, 2ZM, 2ZN, 2ZP, 2ZR, 2ZS, 2ZT, 2ZU, 2ZV, 2ZW, 2ZX, 2ZY, 2ZZ, 3AA, 3AB, 3AC, 3AD, 3AE, 3AF, 3AG, 3AH, 3AJ, 3AK, 3AL, 3AM, 3AN, 3AP, 3AR, 3AS, 3AT, 3AU, 3AV, 3AW, 3AX, 3AY, 3AZ, 3BA, 3BB, 3BC, 3BD, 3BE, 3BF, 3BG, 3BH, 3BJ, 3BK, 3BL, 3BM, 3BN, 3BP, 3BR, 3BS, 3BT, 3BU, 3BV, 3BW, 3BX, 3BY, 3BZ, 3CA, 3CB, 3CC, 3CD, 3CE, 3CF, 3CG, 3CH, 3CJ, 3CK, 3CL, 3CM, 3CN, 3CP, 3CR, 3CS, 3CT, 3CU, 3CV, 3CW, 3CX, 3CY, 3CZ, 3DA, 3DB, 3DC, 3DD, 3DE, 3DF, 3DG, 3DH, 3DJ, 3DK, 3DL, 3DM, 3DN, 3DP, 3DR, 3DS, 3DT, 3DU, 3DV, 3DW, 3DX, 3DY, 3DZ, 3EA, 3EB, 3EC, 3ED, 3EE, 3EF, 3EG, 3EH, 3EJ, 3EK, 3EL, 3EM, 3EN, 3EP, 3ER, 3ES, 3ET, 3EU, 3EV, 3EW, 3EX, 3EY, 3EZ, 3FA, 3FB, 3FC, 3FD, 3FE, 3FF, 3FG, 3FH, 3FJ, 3FK, 3FL, 3FM, 3FN, 3FP, 3FR, 3FS, 3FT, 3FU, 3FV, 3FW, 3FX, 3FY, 3FZ, 3GA, 3GB, 3GC, 3GD, 3GE, 3GF, 3GG, 3GH, 3GJ, 3GK, 3GL, 3GM, 3GN, 3GP, 3GR, 3GS, 3GT, 3GU, 3GV, 3GW, 3GX, 3GY, 3GZ, 3HA, 3HB, 3HC, 3HD, 3HE, 3HF, 3HG, 3HH, 3HJ, 3HK, 3HL, 3HM, 3HN, 3HP, 3HR, 3HS, 3HT, 3HU, 3HV, 3HW, 3HX, 3HY, 3HZ, 3JA, 3JB, 3JC, 3JD, 3JE, 3JF, 3JG, 3JH, 3JJ, 3JK, 3JL, 3JM, 3JN, 3JP, 3JR, 3JS, 3JT, 3JU, 3JV, 3JW, 3JX, 3JY, 3JZ, 3KA, 3KB, 3KC, 3KD, 3KE, 3KF, 3KG, 3KH, 3KJ, 3KK, 3KL, 3KM, 3KN, 3KP, 3KR, 3KS, 3KT, 3KU, 3KV, 3KW, 3KX, 3KY, 3KZ, 3LA, 3LB, 3LC, 3LD, 3LE, 3LF, 3LG, 3LH, 3LJ, 3LK, 3LL, 3LM, 3LN, 3LP, 3LR, 3LS, 3LT, 3LU, 3LV, 3LW, 3LX, 3LY, 3LZ, 3MA, 3MB, 3MC, 3MD, 3ME, 3MF, 3MG, 3MH, 3MJ, 3MK, 3ML, 3MM, 3MN, 3MP, 3MR, 3MS, 3MT, 3MU, 3MV, 3MW, 3MX, 3MY, 3MZ, 3NA, 3NB, 3NC, 3ND, 3NE, 3NF, 3NG, 3NH, 3NJ, 3NK, 3NL, 3NM, 3NN, 3NP, 3NR, 3NS, 3NT, 3NU, 3NV, 3NW, 3NX, 3NY, 3NZ, 3PA, 3PB, 3PC, 3PD, 3PE, 3PF, 3PG, 3PH, 3PJ, 3PK, 3PL, 3PM, 3PN, 3PP, 3PR, 3PS, 3PT, 3PU, 3PV, 3PW, 3PX, 3PY, 3PZ, 3RA, 3RB, 3RC, 3RD, 3RE, 3RF, 3RG, 3RH, 3RJ, 3RK, 3RL, 3RM, 3RN, 3RP, 3RR, 3RS, 3RT, 3RU, 3RV, 3RW, 3RX, 3RY, 3RZ, 3SA, 3SB, 3SC, 3SD, 3SE, 3SF, 3SG, 3SH, 3SJ, 3SK, 3SL, 3SM, 3SN, 3SP, 3SR, 3SS, 3ST, 3SU, 3SV, 3SW, 3SX, 3SY, 3SZ, 3TA, 3TB, 3TC, 3TD, 3TE, 3TF, 3TG, 3TH, 3TJ, 3TK, 3TL, 3TM, 3TN, 3TP, 3TR, 3TS, 3TT, 3TU, 3TV, 3TW, 3TX, 3TY, 3TZ, 3UA, 3UB, 3UC, 3UD, 3UE, 3UF, 3UG, 3UH, 3UJ, 3UK, 3UL, 3UM, 3UN, 3UP, 3UR, 3US, 3UT, 3UU, 3UV, 3UW, 3UX, 3UY, 3UZ, 3VA, 3VB, 3VC, 3VD, 3VE, 3VF, 3VG, 3VH, 3VJ, 3VK, 3VL, 3VM, 3VN, 3VP, 3VR, 3VS, 3VT, 3VU, 3VV, 3VW, 3VX, 3VY, 3VZ, 3WA, 3WB, 3WC, 3WD, 3WE, 3WF, 3WG, 3WH, 3WJ, 3WK, 3WL, 3WM, 3WN, 3WP, 3WR, 3WS, 3WT, 3WU, 3WV, 3WW, 3WX, 3WY, 3WZ, 3XA, 3XB, 3XC, 3XD, 3XE, 3XF, 3XG, 3XH, 3XJ, 3XK, 3XL, 3XM, 3XN, 3XP, 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4SA, 4SB, 4SC, 4SD, 4SE, 4SF, 4SG, 4SH, 4SJ, 4SK, 4SL, 4SM, 4SN, 4SP, 4SR, 4SS, 4ST, 4SU, 4SV, 4SW, 4SX, 4SY, 4SZ, 4TA, 4TB, 4TC, 4TD, 4TE, 4TF, 4TG, 4TH, 4TJ, 4TK, 4TL, 4TM, 4TN, 4TP, 4TR, 4TS, 4TT, 4TU, 4TV, 4TW, 4TX, 4TY, 4TZ, 4UA, 4UB, 4UC, 4UD, 4UE, 4UF, 4UG, 4UH, 4UJ, 4UK, 4UL, 4UM, 4UN, 4UP, 4UR, 4US, 4UT, 4UU, 4UV, 4UW, 4UX, 4UY, 4UZ, 4VA, 4VB, 4VC, 4VD, 4VE, 4VF, 4VG, 4VH, 4VJ, 4VK, 4VL, 4VM, 4VN, 4VP, 4VR, 4VS, 4VT, 4VU, 4VV, 4VW, 4VX, 4VY, 4VZ, 4WA, 4WB, 4WC, 4WD, 4WE, 4WF, 4WG, 4WH, 4WJ, 4WK, 4WL, 4WM, 4WN, 4WP, 4WR, 4WS, 4WT, 4WU, 4WV, 4WW, 4WX, 4WY, 4WZ, 4XA, 4XB, 4XC, 4XD, 4XE, 4XF, 4XG, 4XH, 4XJ, 4XK, 4XL, 4XM, 4XN, 4XP, 4XR, 4XS, 4XT, 4XU, 4XV, 4XW, 4XX, 4XY, 4XZ, 4YA, 4YB, 4YC, 4YD, 4YE, 4YF, 4YG, 4YH, 4YJ, 4YK, 4YL, 4YM, 4YN, 4YP, 4YR, 4YS, 4YT, 4YU, 4YV, 4YW, 4YX, 4YY, 4YZ, 4ZA, 4ZB, 4ZC, 4ZD, 4ZE, 4ZF, 4ZG, 4ZH, 4ZJ, 4ZK, 4ZL, 4ZM, 4ZN, 4ZP, 4ZR, 4ZS, 4ZT, 4ZU, 4ZV, 4ZW, 4ZX, 4ZY, 4ZZ, 5AA, 5AB, 5AC, 5AD, 5AE, 5AF, 5AG, 5AH, 5AJ, 5AK, 5AL, 5AM, 5AN, 5AP, 5AR, 5AS, 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5VC, 5VD, 5VE, 5VF, 5VG, 5VH, 5VJ, 5VK, 5VL, 5VM, 5VN, 5VP, 5VR, 5VS, 5VT, 5VU, 5VV, 5VW, 5VX, 5VY, 5VZ, 5WA, 5WB, 5WC, 5WD, 5WE, 5WF, 5WG, 5WH, 5WJ, 5WK, 5WL, 5WM, 5WN, 5WP, 5WR, 5WS, 5WT, 5WU, 5WV, 5WW, 5WX, 5WY, 5WZ, 5XA, 5XB, 5XC, 5XD, 5XE, 5XF, 5XG, 5XH, 5XJ, 5XK, 5XL, 5XM, 5XN, 5XP, 5XR, 5XS, 5XT, 5XU, 5XV, 5XW, 5XX, 5XY, 5XZ, 5YA, 5YB, 5YC, 5YD, 5YE, 5YF, 5YG, 5YH, 5YJ, 5YK, 5YL, 5YM, 5YN, 5YP, 5YR, 5YS, 5YT, 5YU, 5YV, 5YW, 5YX, 5YY, 5YZ, 5ZA, 5ZB, 5ZC, 5ZD, 5ZE, 5ZF, 5ZG, 5ZH, 5ZJ, 5ZK, 5ZL, 5ZM, 5ZN, 5ZP, 5ZR, 5ZS, 5ZT, 5ZU, 5ZV, 5ZW, 5ZX, 5ZY, 5ZZ, 6AA, 6AB, 6AC, 6AD, 6AE, 6AF, 6AG, 6AH, 6AJ, 6AK, 6AL, 6AM, 6AN, 6AP, 6AR, 6AS, 6AT, 6AU, 6AV, 6AW, 6AX, 6AY, 6AZ, 6BA, 6BB, 6BC, 6BD, 6BE, 6BF, 6BG, 6BH, 6BJ, 6BK, 6BL, 6BM, 6BN, 6BP, 6BR, 6BS, 6BT, 6BU, 6BV, 6BW, 6BX, 6BY, 6BZ, 6CA, 6CB, 6CC, 6CD, 6CE, 6CF, 6CG, 6CH, 6CJ, 6CK, 6CL, 6CM, 6CN, 6CP, 6CR, 6CS, 6CT, 6CU, 6CV, 6CW, 6CX, 6CY, 6CZ, 6DA, 6DB, 6DC, 6DD, 6DE, 6DF, 6DG, 6DH, 6DJ, 6DK, 6DL, 6DM, 6DN, 6DP, 6DR, 6DS, 6DT, 6DU, 6DV, 6DW, 6DX, 6DY, 6DZ, 6EA, 6EB, 6EC, 6ED, 6EE, 6EF, 6EG, 6EH, 6EJ, 6EK, 6EL, 6EM, 6EN, 6EP, 6ER, 6ES, 6ET, 6EU, 6EV, 6EW, 6EX, 6EY, 6EZ, 6FA, 6FB, 6FC, 6FD, 6FE, 6FF, 6FG, 6FH, 6FJ, 6FK, 6FL, 6FM, 6FN, 6FP, 6FR, 6FS, 6FT, 6FU, 6FV, 6FW, 6FX, 6FY, 6FZ, 6GA, 6GB, 6GC, 6GD, 6GE, 6GF, 6GG, 6GH, 6GJ, 6GK, 6GL, 6GM, 6GN, 6GP, 6GR, 6GS, 6GT, 6GU, 6GV, 6GW, 6GX, 6GY, 6GZ, 6HA, 6HB, 6HC, 6HD, 6HE, 6HF, 6HG, 6HH, 6HJ, 6HK, 6HL, 6HM, 6HN, 6HP, 6HR, 6HS, 6HT, 6HU, 6HV, 6HW, 6HX, 6HY, 6HZ, 6JA, 6JB, 6JC, 6JD, 6JE, 6JF, 6JG, 6JH, 6JJ, 6JK, 6JL, 6JM, 6JN, 6JP, 6JR, 6JS, 6JT, 6JU, 6JV, 6JW, 6JX, 6JY, 6JZ, 6KA, 6KB, 6KC, 6KD, 6KE, 6KF, 6KG, 6KH, 6KJ, 6KK, 6KL, 6KM, 6KN, 6KP, 6KR, 6KS, 6KT, 6KU, 6KV, 6KW, 6KX, 6KY, 6KZ, 6LA, 6LB, 6LC, 6LD, 6LE, 6LF, 6LG, 6LH, 6LJ, 6LK, 6LL, 6LM, 6LN, 6LP, 6LR, 6LS, 6LT, 6LU, 6LV, 6LW, 6LX, 6LY, 6LZ, 6MA, 6MB, 6MC, 6MD, 6ME, 6MF, 6MG, 6MH, 6MJ, 6MK, 6ML, 6MM, 6MN, 6MP, 6MR, 6MS, 6MT, 6MU, 6MV, 6MW, 6MX, 6MY, 6MZ, 6NA, 6NB, 6NC, 6ND, 6NE, 6NF, 6NG, 6NH, 6NJ, 6NK, 6NL, 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Greetings, young offenders

Abbotsford. Police send grim holiday cards

Would you prefer to spend holidays at home or locked in jail?

That's the question the Abbotsford police department is asking young offenders in its third annual holiday card sent to people with a history of crime. It pictures a man behind bars with the caption "deck the cells with boughs of holly" on the front.

It's a darker message than the previous two cards, one of which made headlines around the world for its photo of Chief Const. Bob Rich dressed as Santa carrying a machine gun asking people if they are "naughty or nice?" (The next year, a sheepish Santa stood at a chalkboard writing, "I will not play with guns.")

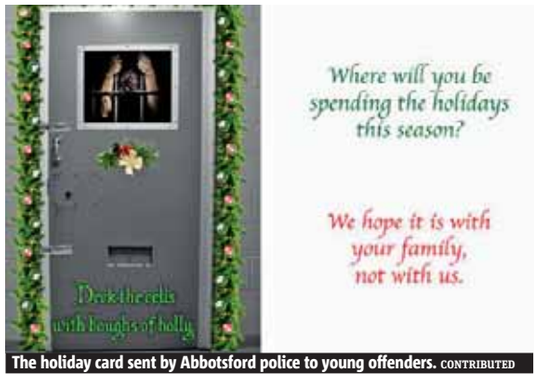
The department took a more serious turn due to the youth conflict that has plagued Abbotsford this year, where two groups have been damaging property and threatening to hurt each other," Const. Ian MacDonald said Wednesday.

"We didn't feel that more humorous or more light would be the way to go. We felt this would have to be more of a reality check," MacDonald said.

Previously, the cards were sent to property offenders and gangsters. This year, about 75 to 100 cards were sent to youth in their mid-to-late teens as a more preventative measure.

About 10 per cent of the people who receive the cards take the time to call the helpline or send letters to the police department, MacDonald said.

EMILY JACKSON/METRO


Where will you be spending the holidays this season?
We hope it is with your family, not with us.
Deck the cells with boughs of holly

The holiday card sent by Abbotsford police to young offenders. CONTRIBUTED

B.C. Avian flu detected at two more farms

Birds at two more farms in the Fraser Valley have tested positive for avian influenza, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency said Wednesday — underscoring the difficulty facing officials attempting to contain the virus.

The outbreak began last week, when turkeys and chickens at two farms in the Fraser Valley tested positive for the H5N2 strain of the disease.

The virus has now been detected at eight locations on seven farms, leaving 155,000 birds either dead or set to be euthanized. The outbreak has prompted surveillance and control measures affecting half of the province, as well as a growing list of trade restrictions on B.C. or Canadian poultry.

Dr. Harpreet Kochhar, Canada's chief veterinary officer, said the new infections did not come as a surprise and he suggested more could turn up in the coming days. Indeed, another farm was also being investigated as suspicious, he said.

"The identification of additional farms is not unexpected, given that avian influenza is highly contagious," Kochhar said during a conference call with reporters.

"Our efforts are directed to controlling the avian influenza virus from spreading. In spite of those measures, there is a possibility that this could show up at other farms. This is something that is attributed to the highly virulent, highly pathogenic nature of the avian influenza virus."

The affected farms are clustered within several kilometres of each other in Abbotsford and Chilliwack.

In each case, the farms were immediately placed under quarantine and plans were made to destroy any birds that had not already been killed by the virus. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Surrey to Vancouver

Charges laid for alleged crime spree

A 32-year-old man has been charged with 14 criminal counts for an alleged Lower Mainland crime spree on Dec. 5 that included two stabbings, a carjacking and a police chase, RCMP said in a statement Wednesday.

Kenny Ottesen is charged with theft of a motor vehicle, five counts of dangerous operation of a motor vehicle, three counts of hit and run and causing a police pursuit, two counts of robbery and two counts of disguise with intent.

On Friday, two employees at a store in Surrey were allegedly stabbed during a shoplifting incident. The suspect allegedly fled and carjacked a woman, spawning a police chase from Coquitlam and Richmond to Vancouver. METRO

Mudslide

Firefighters free trapped man

Firefighters on central Vancouver Island had to use chainsaws to free a man trapped inside his home that was partially buried by a mudslide.

The incident occurred Wednesday near Qualicum Beach when an earthen bank behind the home collapsed. Dashwood Fire Department Chief Nick Acciavetti says a mudslide then partially buried the two-storey home, pinning the man in his basement.

He says crews were forced to use saws and chainsaws to get him out.

Acciavetti says the man was responsive when he was taken to Nanaimo hospital with unknown injuries, and his wife managed to escape from the home.

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Single-family homes at record low

The lack of single-family homes on the market will continue to drive up real-estate prices, according to RE/MAX's 2015 housing-market outlook report.

The report, released Wednesday, forecasts the average residential sale price in Vancouver increasing three per cent to $863,600 in 2015.

While that is a modest gain compared to other Canadian cities, RE/MAX managing broker Cory Raven said it further compounds affordability after a "banner year" in 2014.

One of the major factors driving prices is the availability of single-family homes, which the report says remains at a "record low."

"In Vancouver, on both the east and west side, multiple people are competing for entry-level pricing, which is silly to say about a $1-million home," said Raven. "During an open house, every home has a line-up of 40 to 50 interested buyers. And for every sale, there are another four or five couples or families that put an offer in but are now still out there looking."

The lack of options has a knock-on effect on existing homeowners who are hesitant to sell their homes for fear of finding a suitable next home.

Instead of compromising and moving to the suburbs, Raven said buyers in Vancouver are willing to instead consider smaller accommodations in the form of condominiums and town homes to stay in the city, which puts further strain on those markets.

The trend will continue as more people face the reality of Vancouver's real estate, Raven said. "As Vancouver becomes more and more expensive, it will be like New York or Paris where it's perfectly normal to have a family live in smaller spaces." MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

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The Pemberton Music Festival in summer 2014. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/METRO FILE

Pemberton dates set

Music festival. Popular fest attracted about 20,000 visitors daily

EMILY JACKSON
emily.jackson@metronews.ca

Add tickets to the Pemberton Music Festival to your Christmas list.

The music festival known for its stunning backdrop, big-name lineup and dusty pathways is coming back to B.C. next summer from July 16 to July 19.

"We're incredibly excited to announce our dates for 2015 and look forward to welcoming the best artists and fans in the world back to our beautiful festival site," HUKA Entertainment CEO A.J. Niland said in a statement.

It will be the third such festival in the valley about a 30-minute drive from Whistler. The inaugural event held in 2008 was wildly popular but plagued by nightmarish logistics, with traffic jams on the highway running to and from campgrounds and lodging in the resort town.

But with new organizers HUKA Entertainment at the helm in 2014, the five-day festival ran much more smoothly. It attracted an estimated 20,000 music lovers daily to watch more than 100 acts, including Outkast, Frank Ocean and Snoop Dogg.

It was marred, however, by the tragic death of a 21-year-old Regina man, who was found dead in a tent at one of the campgrounds.

The RCMP eventually ruled out foul play.

Where to buy

Tickets for the 2015 festival go on sale Friday. Prices start at $229 for a four-day general-admission pass and go up to $1,299 for "Super VIP" status.

Counterfeit money

Bogus $100 US bills circulating in Whistler: RCMP

Whistler Mounties are warning the public about fake $100 US bills circulating in the resort town.

Four local businesses have complained about attempts to use the bogus bills since Monday, according to a statement from Whistler RCMP on Wednesday.

"When bogus bills are circulated through the community, it has a direct impact on the local economy," Sgt. Rob Knapton said in a statement.

"If a person successfully uses counterfeit money, it represents a real economic loss to businesses, which impacts their bottom line."

All businesses are urged to check twice before accepting any $100 US bills.

Police are searching for a person of interest in the case. The man is described as five-foot-eight and heavy set with dark hair and olive skin. He speaks with an American accent.

Anyone with information regarding the fake bills is asked to call RCMP at 604-932-3044 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477. EMILY JACKSON/METRO

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Rent control. Reforms would create a 'crisis': Eby

The representative for Vancouver-Point Grey is speaking out against media reports this week that Rich Coleman, the minister responsible for housing, is considering relaxing the rules to allow landlords to increase annual rents beyond the current limit of two per cent plus inflation.

"Reform could create a real crisis for a large group of vulnerable tenants," said NDP MLA David Eby.

Eby said landlords can already set rents at whatever rate they'd like between tenants and are also allowed to apply for rent increases for existing tenants beyond two per cent at the Residential Tenancy Branch if they face rising costs.

Eby said that structure is sufficient in a city where half of renters already spend more than 30 per cent of their gross income on rent, and another quarter spend more than 50 per cent of their income on rent, according to a recent B.C. Non-Profit Housing Association report.

"People could find themselves in a situation where they can no longer afford their home," Eby said.

Coleman was not available for comment, but a statement provided to Metro from his ministry said "no decision has been made."

"There is a new proposal to change the current formula in order to encourage the development and maintenance of rental housing," the statement reads.

"Our goal is to balance landlords' need for a fair return on investment while keeping rental housing affordable."

MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

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Sandbags are placed along the shores of Locarno Beach in Vancouver on Wednesday. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

More rain, high winds forecast

Floods averted. But public warned to stay away from shoreline

Residents in Delta breathed a sigh of relief Wednesday as their homes remained free of flooding, even as the public was warned to stay away from the shoreline.

A temporary berm constructed by crews to protect homes held up, but high winds and heavy rain were expected for the southern coast of the province.

Crews continued sandbagging in Tsawwassen, as Environment Canada forecast up to 25 millilitres of rain for the Vancouver area, except for the North Shore, where 50 millilitres were expected Wednesday.

A local state of emergency was declared Tuesday in part of Tsawwassen, where Delta Mayor Lois Jackson said a section of seawall about 21 metres long had collapsed.

Stormy weather meant BC Ferries cancelled service from Comox to Powell River and Horseshoe Bay to Nanaimo.

In Vancouver, city workers placed about 14,000 sandbags along a low-lying waterfront area in a bid to protect homes from an anticipated king tide and possible storm surge.

However, Peter Judd, the city's general manager of engineering services, said flooding did not occur during the first of the three king tides forecast for the area this season — with the others expected on Dec. 26 and around Jan 10.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Homeless. Petition takes aim at 'selfish yuppies'

"There goes the neighbourhood" is an all-too-familiar cry every time the city selects a site for homeless shelters.

But a new petition isn't targeting residents living in government housing. Instead, it calls on the mayor to "remove the selfish yuppies from the City of Vancouver."

"We need to get this dysfunctional, self-interested 'community' out of our city before they destroy the whole thing," states the Change.org petition by Megan Speers.

"Their greed, combined with their lack of empathy, has made Vancouver into a hostile place in which people living in multimillion-dollar condominiums only attempts at social change are to rally to shut down the few, underfunded cold-weather homeless shelters in the city and force the most marginalized people onto the streets."

More than 330 people had signed the online petition as of noon on Wednesday, one day after it launched.

The petition is a response to a petition started in November, asking the mayor to remove new homeless shelters at 900 Pacific St. and 1335 Howe St. with a total of about 200 beds.

Signed by more than 640 people, the petition by the North False Creek Business and Residents Association argues it is "inappropriate and dangerous that two huge facilities housing a high-risk population be placed adjacent to schools, playgrounds and community amenities." EMILY JACKSON/METRO

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Scientists uncover details of stem cell diversification

A Canadian-led international team of researchers has begun solving the mystery of just how a specialized cell taken from a person's skin is reprogrammed into an embryonic-like stem cell, from which virtually any other cell type in the body can be generated.

The research is being touted as a breakthrough in regenerative medicine that will allow scientists to one day harness stem cells to treat or even cure a host of conditions, from blindness and Parkinson's disease to diabetes and spinal cord injuries.

Besides creating the reprogramming roadmap, the scientists also identified a new type of stem cell, called an F-class stem cell due to its fuzzy appearance.

Their work is detailed in five papers published Wednesday in the prestigious journals Nature and Nature Communications.

Dr. Andras Nagy, a senior scientist at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, led the team of 50 researchers from Canada, the Netherlands, South Korea and Australia, which spent four years analyzing and cataloguing the day-by-day process that occurs in stem cell reprogramming.

Nagy's team set about cataloguing the changes as they occurred by removing cells from culture dishes at set points during the three-week period, then analyzing such cellular material as DNA and proteins present at that moment.

The result is a database that will be available to scientists around the world, which the team hopes will spur new research to advance the field of stem cell-based regenerative medicine.

Co-author Ian Rogers, a scientist in Nagy's lab, said the database will allow researchers to identify various properties of the developing stem cells, which could mean improving their ability to treat or cure disease.

"Should we, instead of waiting the full 21 days, should we start using the cells a week into the progression or two weeks into the progression? Do they have optimal therapeutic properties then? Do they gain some or do they lose some as it moves along?

"So depending on the therapy, so maybe for spinal cord injury treatments ... or diabetes ... you can look at this database and say, 'OK, we are going to stop our cells in the progression at this stage,'" Rogers said.

"So it allows for more personalized therapy." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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East coast. Oil tanker adrift, intact, off N.S.

An oil tanker carrying 675,000 barrels of crude oil was drifting Wednesday off the coast of Nova Scotia after losing its steering.

A spokesman for Teekay Corp., the ship's owner, said the Australian Spirit started having problems Tuesday evening.

Jonathan Anthony said the tanker was about 70 kilometres southeast of Halifax early Wednesday afternoon and it wasn't near any other ships.

One tugboat, the Atlantic Larch, had reached the vessel and another tugboat that is capable of towing the tanker was expected to arrive by the evening, he said.

"The crew and cargo are safe ... We obviously take it very seriously, but there's no imminent danger," he said in an interview from Vancouver.

Keith Laidlaw, an environmental response officer with the coast guard, said if the steering can't be fixed then the tugs will make a towing plan to bring the tanker into harbour for repairs.

The vessel was not in danger of breaking up and its drift towards shore had slowed as seas calmed, he said, adding that if the ship is towed that wouldn't begin until Thursday morning.

Laidlaw said the vessel's towing plan would have to be approved by Transport Canada. THE CANADIAN PRESS

'No imminent danger'

"The crew and cargo are safe ... We obviously take it very seriously, but there's no imminent danger."

Jonathan Anthony, Teekay Corp spokesman

Dancing with dementia

Maria Gorenstein, left, and Louise Rosenberg, centre, who live with dementia, participate in a dance class at Baycrest hospital in Toronto on Tuesday, December 9, 2014. The dance class is a pilot project with Canada's National Ballet School studying the effects of dance on seniors with dementia. DARREN CALABRESE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Unspent funds

Vets' needs called hard to forecast

The inability of Veterans Affairs to spend $1.13 billion over the last eight years should have come as no surprise to the Harper government, which was warned two years ago that the department was struggling to forecast the future needs of its clients.

Veterans Affairs Minister Julian Fantino and Prime Minister Stephen Harper say it's impossible to know how many veterans and their families will request death and disability benefits in any given year.

Auditor general Michael Ferguson's fall 2012 report warned that Veterans Affairs was producing forecasts of future client needs that were based on historic data, rather than current information. THE CANADIAN PRESS

17 years later

U.S. may join landmine ban

The Canadian foreign minister who was a driving force behind a groundbreaking treaty to ban landmines 17 years ago says he sees encouraging signs that the United States will finally sign on.

Former Liberal foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy says American support would be a major boost to the treaty, which the U.S. and three dozen other countries have snubbed since it was signed in Ottawa in 1997.

This week Secretary of State John Kerry said his country was going to look at joining the Ottawa Convention, which has more than 160 member countries. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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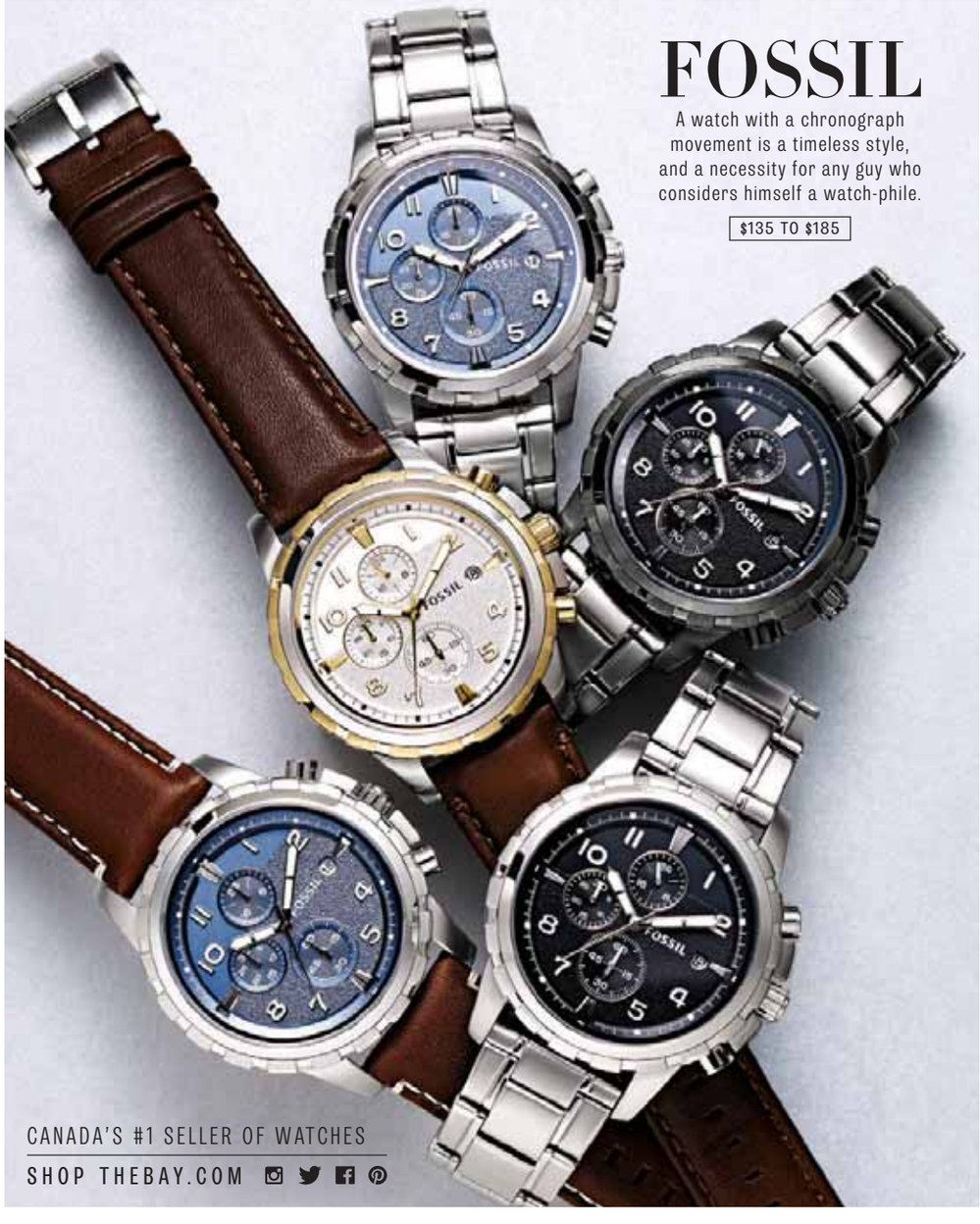
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Halifax Regional Police Const. Stacey Opalka snaps a selfie with Destiny Galant and Santa during the 10th annual CopShop event on Wednesday.

Cops shop for a cause

Holiday spirit. Annual CopShop event in Halifax helps kids discover that police are real people

Destiny Galant skips down one of the aisles of Sport Chek, passing display shelves stacked with boxes of winter boots.

"What about these?" Const. Stacey Opalka asks the nine-year-old, pointing to a child-sized Sorel boot.

"No," Destiny replies.

"What about these?" Opalka asks again, picking up a similar boot a few feet down.

"No," the nine-year-old says again, arriving at the store's shoe wall, reaching to grab a woman's black UGG boot priced at $197.98, calling out, "Stacey, these."

Opalka, shaking her head, smiles. "She's got good taste, though."

A group of 50 Halifax Regional Police officers traded in their blue hats for reindeer antlers and elf ears as they played personal shoppers to 52 children Wednesday morning for the 10th annual CopShop at the Halifax Shopping Centre.

The annual event gave each child a $200 gift certificate to the mall and a stocking filled with goodies from Old Saint Nick, as well as a winter coat from Sport Chek.

Besides helping the children get into the holiday spirit, one spokeswoman from the mall explained the event is a chance to teach kids that police officers are actually real people.

"It lets them see (cops) as not only stoic police officers, but also warm, cuddly teddy bears, too." Stephanie Schnare said Wednesday.

For the first time this year, Schnare said, the mall handed out an extra $10 gift certificate for the children to buy a toy to later donate to a family in need.

After assisting Destiny to try on a cheetah-print jacket, with black, white, pink and purple spots, Opalka and her partner, Const. Chris DeLong — affectionally deemed "butler" by Destiny — were next tasked with finding her boots.

"Are those boots made for walking?" Opalka asked, as Destiny strutted around wearing a new pair of black and purple high-top Sorels.

Before bolting to the checkout counter with her new boots, Destiny handed DeLong her new jacket.

"Here, am I carrying that too?" he asked, already carrying the nine-year-old's stocking, wish list and can of root beer.

"Hurry up, butler," Destiny yelled back, laughing. STEPHANIE TAYLOR/FOR METRO IN HALIFAX

Quoted

"This (event) allows us to see the true spirit of Christmas."
Stephanie Schnare of the Halifax Shopping Centre

Yukon

Dogs, matches can equal house fire

Two dogs likely started a house fire by chewing or playing with a box of matches, the Yukon fire marshal Dennis Berry says.

Berry warns against leaving matches where pets can get them.

An investigation determined the fire started in or beside the dogs' bed, and the source of ignition was likely the "strike anywhere" matches, he said.

The pooches escaped through a doggy door. Berry said there was smoke damage to the one-storey residence. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hungry polar bears. Six cubs shot in remote Arctic

Residents in a remote Arctic hamlet are baffled and saddened by the number of hungry polar bear cubs that have wandered into their community since the fall and have had to be shot.

Six bears have been spotted in the Nunavut community of Taloyoak since late September, said Bob Lyall, who works with the local Hunters and Trappers Organization.

"They're scavenging," he said Wednesday.

"They're nothing to fool with. It's a scary situation when it happens."

Taloyoak is used to polar bears and has an annual hunting quota of 25. The six kills since September will come off that quota.

But Lyall said no hunter is happy about having to kill a cub.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Large bears

Bob Lyall says one of the bears scavenging for food was over two metres long.

- One was spotted in town just as children in school were about to be let out for recess.

National chief Perry Bellegarde speaks after being elected on the first ballot at the Assembly of First Nations Election in Winnipeg on Wednesday. TREVOR HAGAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

No more business as usual: AFN chief

Pipelines, energy. Bellegarde pledges opposition to projects that deny First Nation fair share of profits

The new national chief of the Assembly of First Nations is warning it will no longer be business as usual when it comes to development on First Nations land.

In a fiery speech to assembly delegates in Winnipeg on Wednesday, Saskatchewan's Perry Bellegarde singled out pipelines and energy development as one of the frontlines in his battle to put First Nations on equal footing with the rest of Canada.

"To the people across this great land, I say to you that the values of fairness and tolerance which Canada exports to the world are a lie when it comes to our people," Bellegarde said.

"Canada will no longer develop pipelines, no longer develop transmission lines, or any infrastructure, on our lands as business as usual.

"That is not on."

Quoted

"Canada is Indian land."

Perry Bellegarde, newly elected national chief of the Assembly of First Nations

He pledged opposition to any project that deprives First Nations a share of the profits.

"We will no longer accept poverty and hopelessness while resource companies and governments grow fat off our lands and territories and resources," he said.

Bellegarde, who was until Wednesday chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, took 63 per cent of the 464 first-ballot votes cast, more than the 60 per cent required for victory.

He told reporters the assembly under his leadership will "be respectful, it's going to be responsive and it's going to be relevant to First Nations people." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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A hockey legend remembered

Pallbearers and former Montreal Canadiens teammates (clockwise from back left: Guy Lafleur, Jean-Guy Talbot, Robert Rousseau, Serge Savard, Yvan Cournoyer and Phil Goyette) carry the casket as family members walk behind after the funeral service for Canadiens legend Jean Béliveau on Wednesday in Montreal.

PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada will act on tips from torture: Official

Intelligence information. A spokesman for Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney said that the government will act on 'a tip from any source'

The federal Conservatives say they don't condone the use of torture, but will continue to act on intelligence when "Canadians' lives are in danger."

A spokesman for Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney's office said Wednesday that Canada does not engage in, nor condone, torture by national security agencies.

But Jean-Christophe de Le Rue said that Canada will act on "a tip from any source" if Canadians' lives are in danger.

"The primary responsibility of Canadian security agencies is to protect Canadian life and property," de Le Rue wrote in a prepared statement. "We will continue to ensure that intelligence is reviewed and assessed by Canadian intelligence experts before it is acted upon."

Opposition critics are calling on the Conservative government to take away Canadian security agencies' ability to send or request information to foreign partners that could lead to torture.

The calls come a day after the U.S. Senate revealed the CIA misled its political masters about how widespread and brutal the Bush-era practice of "enhanced interrogation techniques" of detainees was.

The report detailed the conditions imposed on detainees in CIA black sites across the world. Techniques used by American agents and contractors included forcing detainees to stand on broken legs, forced rectal feeding and frequent waterboarding (simulated drowning).

Five Canadian security agencies can use national security information from foreign partners, even if it was obtained through torture. According to documents obtained by The Canadian Press, the head of the agency must weigh several factors before approving the information sharing — including the opinion of Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird's department.

Speaking earlier Wednesday, Baird refused to address questions about domestic agencies' use of information gained from CIA torture.

"Canada doesn't torture anyone. Period. Period," Baird said after a news conference.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Quoted

"The primary responsibility of Canadian security agencies is to protect Canadian life and property."

Jean-Christophe de Le Rue, spokesman for Public Safety Minister Stephen Blaney

FOR MORE COVERAGE ON THE U.S. TORTURE REPORT, SEE PAGE 20.

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Malala receives her Nobel Peace Prize

Speaks out. Pakistani teenage girl survived Taliban assassination attempt for her education activism

The Pakistani teenager stood on the stage of Oslo City Hall as the youngest Nobel Peace laureate, smiling as she listened to the thunderous ovation.

Now, everybody knows: She is Malala.

Shot in the head by the Taliban two years ago for speaking out on education, 17-year-old Malala Yousafzai on Wednesday beamed as she received the Nobel Peace Prize and taught a lesson in courage.

"I had two options. One was to remain silent and wait to be killed. And the second was to speak up and then be killed. I chose the second one. I decided to speak up," Malala said.

And with that, Malala proved that teenagers could tell the elders a thing or two. Anyone who hadn't read her memoir, "I am Malala," was about to get an education.

She adjusted her coral pink headscarf and made no effort to hide any scars that might remain from the attack.

She thanked her parents for unconditional love and then humbly suggested that she was somehow not all that special — just a girl who fights with her brothers and who wanted to learn above all else.

"As far as I know, I am just a committed and even stubborn person who wants to see every child getting quality education, who wants to see women having equal rights and who wants peace in every corner of the world," she said.

"Education is one of the blessings of life, and one of its necessities."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Not over yet

Pistorius trial may be appealed

Oscar Pistorius again faces the possibility of a murder conviction after a South African judge ruled Wednesday that prosecutors can appeal against the double-amputee Olympian's conviction on the lesser charge of culpable homicide.

Pistorius could face a minimum of 15 years in prison if the appeals court overturns his conviction and raises it to murder.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pause in fighting

East Ukraine ceasefire holds

Ukraine will continue upholding a truce with Russian-backed separatists following a day largely free of exchanges of fire between the warring sides, a military spokesman in Kyiv said Wednesday.

Both the government and rebels have accused each other of sporadic violations of the truce that began Tuesday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hong Kong. Protesters to resist removal from camp

Hong Kong student protest leaders vowed Wednesday to stay until the last minute and peacefully resist a police operation to clear them off a highway where they've been camped out for 2-1/2 months.

Thousands of protesters and supporters streamed into the site on the last night of what's come to be known as the "Umbrella Movement," named for the pro-democracy protesters' preferred method of deflecting police pepper spray.

Many huddled in the hundreds of tents that remained on the thoroughfare outside the specially administered Chinese city's government headquarters, less than a day before court workers assisted by police were scheduled to sweep them out. Others took photos, listened to speeches and lined up for souvenir leather bracelets and other mementos handmade on the spot by volunteers.

"We will still resist till the last moment," said Alex Chow, secretary-general of the Hong Kong Federation of Students. He said the reason for staying until the end is "not simply for us be arrested, but to demonstrate our spirit" of civil disobedience.

Authorities will start by removing barricades and other obstructions from three sections of road covered by a court order. Then, they will clear other nearby blocked roads to reopen the entire area to traffic. Anyone who refuses to leave will be arrested, police said.

Protesters gather at the occupied area outside government headquarters in Hong Kong on Wednesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

While some had already packed up their belongings on Wednesday, many promised it would not be the end of the pro-democracy movement, using large yellow banners, chalk scrawled on asphalt or balloon letters stuck on a wall to declare "We'll be back."

The protesters reject Beijing's restrictions on the first election for the city's top leader, scheduled for 2017, but have failed to win any concessions from Hong Kong's government. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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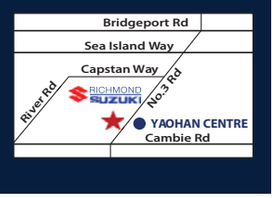

Torture report. CIA fights to write historical record

Top spies past and present campaigned Wednesday to discredit the Senate's investigation into the CIA's harrowing torture practices after Sept. 11, 2001, battling to define the historical record and deter potential legal action around the world.

The Senate intelligence committee's report doesn't urge prosecution for wrongdoing, and the Justice Department has no interest in reopening a criminal probe. But the threat to former interrogators and their superiors was underlined as a UN special investigator demanded those responsible for "systematic crimes" be brought to justice, and human rights groups pushed for the arrest of key CIA and Bush administration figures if they travel overseas.

Current and former CIA officials pushed back, determined to paint the Senate report as a political stunt by Senate Democrats tarnishing a program that saved American lives. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Zacarias Moussaoui

'20th hijacker' asks for transfer to Guantanamo Bay

An imprisoned man known as the "20th hijacker" in the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks asked a South Florida federal judge Wednesday for a transfer to the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where several alleged senior terror plotters are awaiting trial.

The request is part of two rambling, handwritten letters filed in Miami federal court by Zacarias Moussaoui. He is serving a life prison sentence after pleading guilty in 2005 to conspiring with the 19 hijackers in the attacks.

Moussaoui signed one letter as the "so-call 20th hijacker" and a "Slave to Allah." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Report casts new shadow over Zero Dark Thirty film

Story of hunt for Osama bin Laden.
Made with rare blend of traditional filmmaking and journalism

The damning Senate Intelligence Committee report on post-9/11 interrogation techniques has cast a new pall over the 2012 film Zero Dark Thirty.

Kathryn Bigelow's docudrama about the hunt for Osama bin Laden ignited controversy for implying that the "enhanced" interrogation techniques of the detainee program helped lead to finding bin Laden. Bigelow claimed that torture was a part of the story that couldn't be ignored.

The Senate report released Tuesday found that the coercive techniques led to no unique intelligence, a conclusion that seemed to debunk, officially, part of the narrative suggested by Zero Dark Thirty.

California Sen. Diane Feinstein, the Democratic chair of the Intelligence Committee that released the report, had been one of the most vocal critics of Zero Dark Thirty. In a 2012 letter to Sony Pictures co-signed by Republican Sen. John McCain, Feinstein called the film "factually inaccurate" and wrote that filmmakers had an obligation not to "shape American public opinion in a disturbing and misleading manner."

Bigelow was asked about the report on The Daily Show on Tuesday while promoting a short film about elephant poaching and the ivory trade.

Quoted

"It's complicated. It's very, very, very complicated."

Kathryn Bigelow, director of Zero Dark Thirty

Director Kathryn Bigelow attends the 86th Annual Academy Awards Oscar Foreign Language Reception at LACMA on Feb. 28 in Los Angeles, Calif.
VALERIE MACON/GETTY IMAGES

"We made the movie based on the reporting that we did," said Bigelow. "I applaud transparency in government, so I think it's good that it's out there." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Extinction looms for northern white rhino

Kenya. Natural reproduction fails for three of the world's six remaining northern white rhinos

The task was never going to be easy: Fly four highly endangered rhinos from a Czech Republic zoo to East Africa, drive them to the savannah grasses of Mount Kenya and hope that the natural environment helps produce a calf, staving off extinction.

The experiment has all but failed.

The keepers of three northern white rhinos in Kenya — half of the world's remaining rhinos of that species — have begun saying publicly for the first time that their one male and two female rhinos will certainly not reproduce naturally.

The silver lining, though, is science. Efforts will now be made to keep the species alive through in-vitro fertilization, and possibly by working with the rhinos' genetic material in a budding field known as de-extinction.

"We always knew from the very beginning that the chances of this working were small even if they bred," said Richard Vigne, chief executive of the Ol Pejeta Conservancy, where the rhinos have lived since 2009.

The conservancy said in a statement Wednesday that artificial reproductive techniques "could provide the last chance of survival for the world's most endangered mammal."

That echoed the phrase written on the wooden crates the rhinos were transported in from Nairobi to Ol Pejeta: "Last Chance to Survive."

Some animal experts at the time said the effort was too little, too late, and that the experiment's budget could have been better spent on other conservation projects.

But the bulk of the more than $100,000 effort came from a donor — Alastair Lucas, then the vice-chairman of Goldman Sachs in Australia — who wanted to see the project carried out.

Vigne said the project was not done in vain.

"They've been returned to Africa from a zoo, and they've thrived in that environment. In that way it's been a success," he said. "The fact they haven't bred is clearly a massive disappointment, but there are new technologies being invented all the time to rescue technically extinct species."

In this photo taken Dec. 1, keeper Mohamed Doyo pats female northern white rhino Najin in her pen, where she is being kept for observation at the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya. BEN CURTIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

One of the two male rhinos transferred to Ol Pejeta died of an unknown cause earlier this year. Veterinarians that examined the remaining three last month determined that the male's sperm count is very low and that the two females either cannot get pregnant or cannot carry a pregnancy to term.

The in-vitro fertilization experiment could take place with a southern white surrogate mother. In addition, Vigne said scientists are working with old genetic material to see if they can resurrect the passenger pigeon or dodo bird. By contrast, he noted that the genetic material from northern whites is still alive.

The northern white rhino is a major mammalian species that is "probably or potentially" going to become extinct in the coming years, Vigne said, notwithstanding new reproductive technology.

"And to me that's a real indictment of the human race," he said. "We're all responsible for it, and to stand by and watch it happen ... I think would have been horribly wrong."

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L&C Pharmacy and Nutrition House	Richmond	Your Vitamin Store	Vancouver
Lotte Shopping Centre	Vancouver	Tung Yun Tong Herbal Co. Ltd.	Richmond
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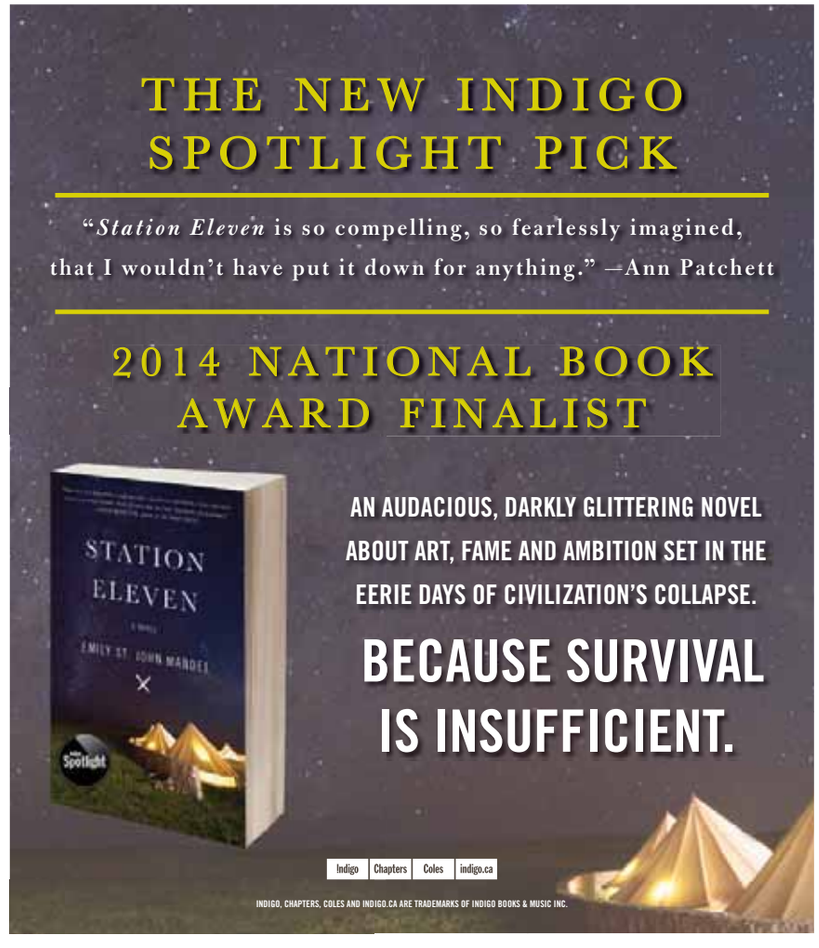
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Israeli minister says:

Obama not 'around forever'

U.S. criticism of Israel's settlement policies has slowed down construction in the West Bank, Israel's defence minister said Wednesday, adding that he hopes the slowdown will be "temporary" because the Obama administration "won't be around forever."

The comments by Moshe Yaalon came days before Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu goes to Rome to meet U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.

Yaalon has previously derided U.S. peace efforts in the Middle East, calling Kerry "obsessive" and "messianic." Those comments rankled Washington officials and stoked tensions with Israel's ally.

Speaking Tuesday at a Jewish seminary in the West Bank, Yaalon said Israel wants to build more settlement housing but global criticism led by the U.S. has prompted restraint.

"The United States has led the charge," Yaalon said. "This (U.S.) administration won't be around forever and I hope it is temporary."

The remarks could lead to further tensions between Israel and Washington, which were already on display in October, when the U.S. refused Yaalon's requests to meet several top national security aides during a visit to Washington.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mourners of Palestinian cabinet member Ziad Abu Ain carry posters with his picture at the main hospital in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Wednesday. NASSER NASSER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Palestinian cabinet minister dies after West Bank protest

First time. Official succumbs after scuffle with Israeli troops

A Palestinian cabinet member died Wednesday shortly after he and other protesters scuffled with Israeli troops near a West Bank village. The forces also fired tear gas close to the demonstrators, witnesses said.

During the scuffle, a member of Israel's security forces held Ziad Abu Ain, 55, by the neck. He collapsed, received first aid and died en route to a hospital, witnesses said.

What killed the Palestinian official remains unclear. His body will undergo an autopsy by Palestinian, Jordanian and Israeli pathologists, the Israeli army said. Abu Ain is the first Palestinian cabinet member to die immediately after a protest.

Later Wednesday, a 12-year-old Palestinian boy was shot in the head and seriously wounded in a confrontation with Israeli soldiers in the nearby Jalazoun refugee camp, said Ahmed Bitawi, the head of Ramallah Hospital.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas was to meet with senior officials from the Palestine Liberation Organization and his Fatah movement later Wednesday to discuss a possible response to Abu Ain's death. In a statement, Abbas called the death a "barbaric act," but added that he would wait for the results of the investigation before deciding on a response. He also called for three days of mourning in the Palestinian territories.

In Brussels, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini called for an independent investigation and said that "reports of excessive use of force by Israeli security forces are extremely worrying."

The U.N. envoy to the region, Robert Serry, appealed for calm and urged Israel to carry out an immediate, transparent investigation.

Wednesday's events began with a march by several dozen Palestinians who headed to agricultural land near the West Bank village of Turmus Aya to plant olive tree saplings, participants said. The land is close to an unauthorized Israeli settlement outpost, Adei-Ad, one of dozens in the West Bank, and mostly off limits to the village's farmers, protesters said.

As the marchers walked toward the land, Israeli soldiers fired tear gas and threw stun grenades at the Palestinians, said Kamal Abu Sassaka, an assistant to Abu Ain who said he was by the cabinet member's side the entire time.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fourth in Europe

Irish lawmakers OK recognition of Palestinian state

Lawmakers have passed a non-binding resolution urging Ireland to recognize Palestinian statehood, but Ireland's government says it would take that step only in coordination with European Union partners.

Tuesday night's unanimous vote followed similarly aspirational motions in Britain, Spain and France. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Video-game makers face industry crunch

Rush to market. Ubisoft's recent Assassin's Creed Unity game highlights the industry's 'ship now, fix later' trend: Critic

The video-game industry is raking in record profits, but many developers are facing criticism as recent big-budget releases have been rushed to market with technical problems.

Ubisoft CEO Yannis Mallat issued a mea culpa earlier this month for the November release of Assassin's Creed Unity, acknowledging that the overall quality of the game "was diminished by bugs and unexpected technical issues."

The company — which has development offices in Toronto and Montreal that employ more than 2,000 people — intends to offer free downloadable content or a free game for those who bought the product before it was patched with a software update.

Toronto-based syndicated video-game critic Marc Saltzman notes a disturbing "ship now, fix later" trend, where developers take advantage of customers' Internet bandwidth to repair a game after its release.

With more than 40 per cent of games released in November and December, Saltzman says many companies set unrealistic deadlines ahead of the holidays.

The Witcher 3, another highly anticipated 2015 release from Polish video game developer CD Projekt RED, was delayed from this fall to May 19, 2015.

"These companies have so many people to answer to that when things are delayed they are the ones that suffer. Their investors get upset, their stock prices fall and the public themselves turn on them pretty quickly," says Brendan Frye, editor-in-chief of Canadian video game publication CG Magazine.

"These issues are going to persist unless consumers start demanding (developers) do make the change, take the time to finish it, and people have to understand that things that are built well take time."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 87.11¢ (-0.3¢)

Natural gas: $3.71 US (no change)
Dow Jones: 17,533.15 (-268.05

TSX 13,852 (-342.78)

OIL 60.94 US (-2.88)

GOLD $1,229.40 US (-2.60)

Canadian real estate

Soft landing: Poloz

The Bank of Canada says house prices may be overvalued by up to 30 per cent, but governor Stephen Poloz says the real-estate market is headed for a soft landing.

"We believe the economy is gathering strength, it's beginning to rebuild itself, it's going to create new jobs and income is going to go up," Poloz said.

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VOICES

ARMING TRANSIT STAFF

Do you want transit workers armed in your city? With the Toronto Transit Commission expanding its proof-of-payment system, so, too, will it be expanding its force of fare inspectors equipped with batons. The TTC says the practice is meant to protect inspectors from belligerent riders, but critics say this sets a bad precedent

Yes

Staff need the right gear to protect them

Brad Ross

Fare inspectors began riding the 501 Queen and 510 Spadina streetcars in August, introducing themselves to customers and explaining the proof-of-payment (POP) concept that requires anyone riding those two lines to show a Metropass or paper transfer if asked by an inspector.

All streetcar routes become POP as the new streetcars are introduced, but the TTC is looking to accelerate that, starting with the 504 King streetcar on Jan. 1.

While fare inspectors are educating and informing customers about POP, they will also be issuing tickets when warranted.

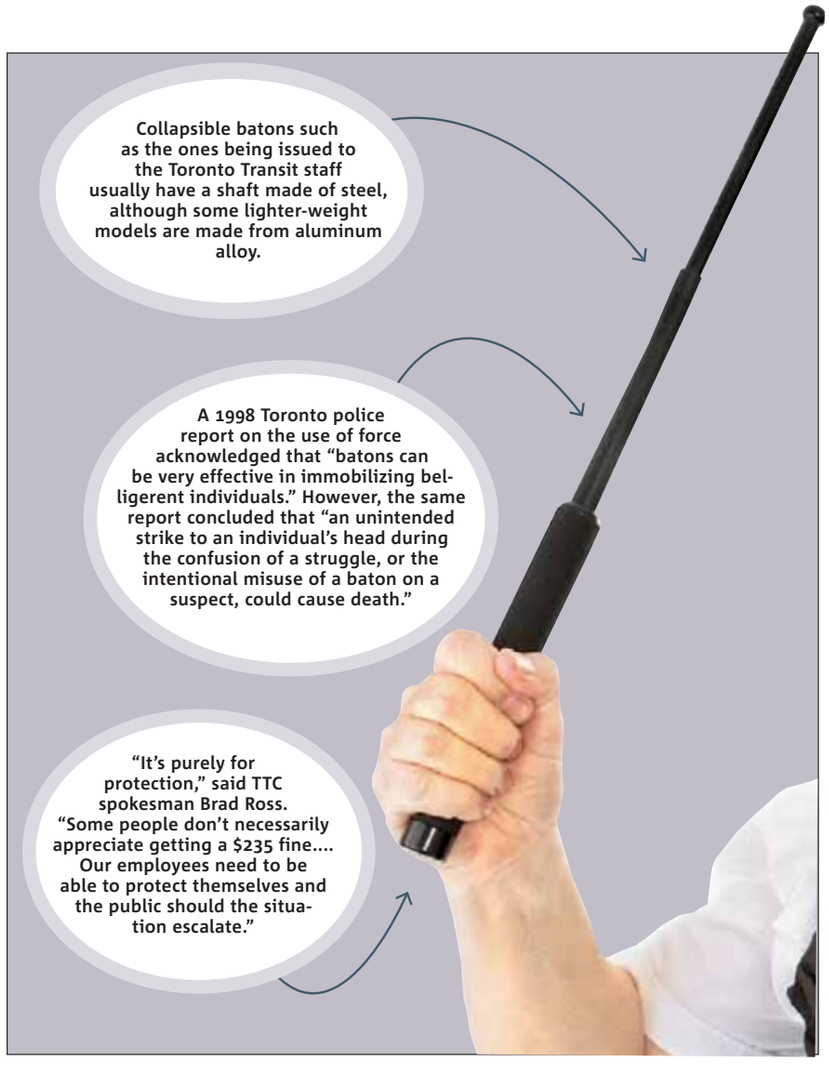
The fine for failing to pay a fare is $235. And while fare inspectors are professional, highly trained and accountable in all they do, there may be instances where our inspectors will be required to defend themselves from someone who objects to being asked for proof-of-payment or is being issued a ticket.

In all such cases, police are called.

As an employer, the TTC has an obligation to ensure its employees have personal protective equipment for the job they're being asked to do.

The TTC understands the concerns around use of force, which is why, in addition to training at a police standard, oversight and accountability are firmly in place should those tools be used improperly.

Brad Ross is a spokesman for the TTC.


Collapsible batons such as the ones being issued to the Toronto Transit staff usually have a shaft made of steel, although some lighter-weight models are made from aluminum alloy.
A 1998 Toronto police report on the use of force acknowledged that "batons can be very effective in immobilizing belligerent individuals." However, the same report concluded that "an unintended strike to an individual's head during the confusion of a struggle, or the intentional misuse of a baton on a suspect, could cause death."
"It's purely for protection," said TTC spokesman Brad Ross. "Some people don't necessarily appreciate getting a $235 fine.... Our employees need to be able to protect themselves and the public should the situation escalate."

No

Batons won't solve transit problems

Dr. Daniel Bear

The TTC's practice of equipping fare inspectors with batons and handcuffs is troubling. While the spectre of harassment and assault on public transit is a valid concern, providing these tools to inspectors implies they regularly encounter violence and criminality in their work — not a reassuring message to TTC riders.

In a recent news event, neither the TTC nor the Toronto Police Service were able to furnish statistics on the number of criminal incidents that occur on the TTC.

With the decision to introduce what are effectively new powers and weapons into the mix, it would seem best if there was clear evidence of a need.

I would suggest the TTC reconsider the efficacy of armament, as such tools are entirely reactive in nature.

Perhaps more proactive work with passengers to encourage fare compliance, enhanced patrol of TTC vehicles by actual police officers, and a payment confirmation system more advanced than strips of newsprint would be a better route than arming fare inspectors.

Transit users need to feel safe, but they also want to get where they are going. Frankly, that seems to be a much bigger issue in Toronto. Handcuffs and batons won't solve the TTC's problems, and instead set a bad precedent at a time when the rest of Ontario's law enforcement community is becoming more proactive.

Dr. Daniel Bear is a professor in the Community and Justice Studies program at Sheridan College.

Here's a look at how transit authorities arm — or don't arm — their staff around the country and the world

Halifax

Does not have transit police. Transit drivers aren't armed and don't have the authority to make arrests.

Ottawa

OC Transpo Special Constables are designated peace officers and are trained by police to use batons and pepper spray.

Toronto

Similar to police, Toronto's Transit Enforcement Officers can make arrests. Fare inspectors can intervene only if they've seen an offence personally.

Winnipeg

Has six transit inspectors appointed as Special Constables. They do not carry weapons and are not able to make arrests.

Calgary and Edmonton

Transit officials in both cities are armed with batons, pepper spray and handcuffs.

Vancouver

Vancouver's Transit Police carry guns and have the same authority as other police officers.

New York City

The NYPD polices the city's transit system. Officers are armed and have the authority to make arrests.

London, U.K.

Most British Transport police are unarmed. Its special firearms unit, however, does carry guns.

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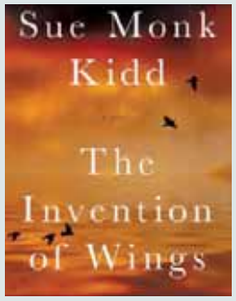
The year's need-to-know books

Here at Metro, it's our solemn duty to spend the year reading all the latest books. Now it's time to present our annual cheat-sheet: We're offering up just enough information to help you sound like you've been reading all year too. These five books came out in 2014, but they'll still be dominating cocktail parties and casual conversation well into 2015. So if you're struggling to make small talk at that significant other's holiday work party, here are some suggestions.

EMILY LAURENCE
Metro in New York City

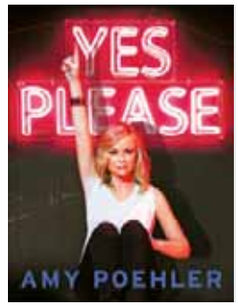


The Invention of Wings

By: Sue Monk Kidd

Two words: Oprah-endorsed. The Secret Life Of Bees author Sue Monk Kidd has another bestseller on her hands with her novel about a reluctant slave owner who forms an unlikely friendship with her slave during the 1800s.

Line to drop at a party: "What's interesting is that the principle character is based on a real champion of the African-American and women's rights movement, yet she's virtually unheard of. It makes me wonder what other women crusaders never made the history books."

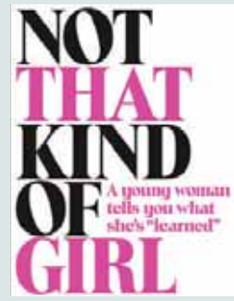


Yes Please

By: Amy Poehler

Everyone is still talking about the Parks and Rec star's memoir, in which she chronicles the path from her early days of comedy to her Saturday Night Live career. She also gets real about her divorce from Will Arnett, past drug use, motherhood and how she feels about entering her 40s.

Line to drop at a party: "Amy is a classy broad. She talks about how heartbroken she was after her divorce without bashing her ex. That takes some epic restraint."

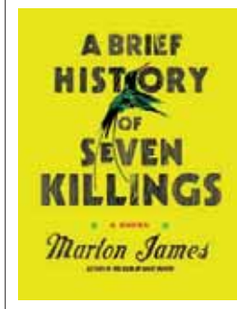


Not That Kind of Girl

By: Lena Dunham

Girls creator and star Lena Dunham dominated blogs with her book of personal essays. There are plenty of gems of wisdom such as, "Being treated like s—t is not an amusing game or a transgressive intellectual experiment. It's something you accept, condone and learn to believe you deserve."

Line to drop at a party: "I wish she talked about her friendships with the Girls cast more, and she only mentions Jack Antoff twice. What gives? Maybe it's harder for her to write about things that make her most happy than the things that give her extreme anxiety."



A Brief History of Seven Killings

By: Marlon James

Using an attempted murder on Bob Marley as a focal point, Marlon James tells the fictional histories of seven gunmen to expose the dangerous Jamaican climate during the '70s, '80s and '90s. Also, the 700-page tome is definitely not brief and it includes many more than seven killings. Just saying.

Line to drop at a party: "James narrates through dozens of different voices, yet it never feels disorganized or disjointed. That's what makes it genius."

All The Light We Cannot See

By: Anthony Doerr

This novel has dual narratives, both set in the Second World War: One is about a blind 16-year-old girl living in France and hoping to escape the bombings, while the other follows a guy named Werner who works for Hitler's side of the war, tasked with tracking down illegal radio transmissions. Their lives inevitably intercept in an anticipated, yet highly enjoyable climax.

Line to drop at a party: "The line 'Open your eyes and see what you can see with them before you close them forever,' changed my entire outlook on life."

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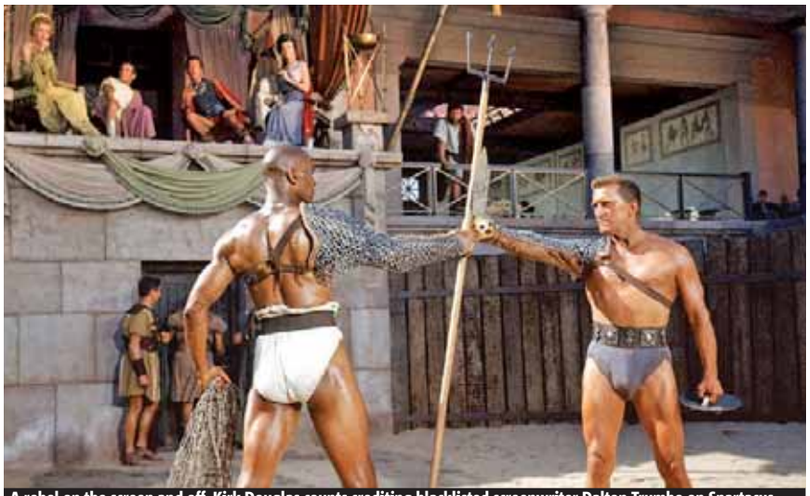


A rebel on the screen and off, Kirk Douglas counts crediting blacklisted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo on Spartacus as his most rebellious move. "I was much younger then, and I was much more stubborn," he says. CONTRIBUTED

Kirk Douglas reflects on a life of poetic passion

Life Could Be Verse. Legendary actor, 98, shares poems, essays and photos about his family, career and wife of more than 60 years

Kirk Douglas is done with writing. The rakish screen legend with the famously dimpled chin made that abundantly clear on a recent afternoon at his Beverly Hills home, a few days before the release of his poetry collection Life Could Be Verse: Reflections on Love, Loss, and What Really Matters.

"To me, this is my best book, and my last book," said Douglas, seated next to Anne, his wife of more than 60 years.

It was a pronouncement that came up more than a few times. The Spartacus star, who just turned 98, has 87 films to his name, 11 books, and is one of the last living members of old Hollywood. By now, the world probably thinks it knows Kirk Douglas.

But in some ways, Life Could Be Verse is his most personal work, featuring poems from throughout his life, along with essays and private family photos that help paint a picture of him as a man, a father and husband.

In an industry not known for domestic stability, Kirk and Anne may be one of the greatest Hollywood romances. Seated on a cozy couch in a home that is elegant, modest and lived-in, the couple recalled their first meeting in Paris. He was working on the film Act of Love. She was the publicist.

Romantic ruminations

Anne and Kirk Douglas THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kirk Douglas, who now has 11 books to his name, says writing helps keep him grounded. "We are living in a town of make-believe. I have done about 90 movies. That means that, every time, I was pretending to be someone else. There comes a time in your life when you say, 'Well, who am I?' I have found writing books a good substitute to making pictures. When you write a book, you get to determine what part you are playing."

"I thought she was so beautiful, and I lowered my voice and said, 'Would you like to have dinner?'" he said. "I waited for an answer and she said, 'No, I think I will go home and make some eggs and go to bed.'"

Anne had her own views about transient movie stars. A lot of her friends were going out with actors at the time. "I said to myself, I'm not going to do that," she said.

Then she attended a charity event where actors played the parts of circus performers. Douglas, sporting a tuxedo, decided his talent would be cleaning up after the elephants. "I held on until he picked up the elephant doo," she laughed. "That did it for me."

"Obviously she was looking for a garbage collector," Douglas chimed in.

Still, a cute beginning is hardly noteworthy. Longevity is. "Romance begins at 80, and I ought to know," he said, referencing one of his poems.

"I'm a romantic guy. You think I'm always shooting guns with John Wayne, but I can be romantic. And, listen, we're sitting here. We have been married for 60 years. A few poems help."

Over the years, the Douglases have devoted themselves to philanthropy. The shared passion has been important for the couple, who have endured tragedy, including his stroke in 1996 and the death of their youngest son, Eric, in 2004.

"Our goal has been, since we're able to do that, to help a little bit and to share what you have with those in need. That has been a very big bond between us," said Anne.

They sold art from their personal collection to help fund various causes, including the restoration of more than 400 playgrounds in the Los Angeles area and the development of a shelter for homeless women downtown. In 2012, the couple pledged $50 million to five charitable organizations.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Internet star Zoella had 'help' with book

Novel. Publisher admits YouTube sensation did not pen her record-setting debut

Young British YouTube star Zoella, whose debut novel sold a record number of copies in Britain in its first week, has admitted she had "help" writing the book.

Girl Online became the fastest-selling work by a first-time author in Britain since records began in 1998, selling more than 78,000 copies in seven days when it was published last month.

Zoe Sugg, 24, became a YouTube sensation under the pseudonym Zoella when she started a "vlog," or video blog, in 2009, filled with fashion, beauty and lifestyle tips for young women and girls.

She built up more than six million subscribers and went on to sign a two-book deal with Penguin Random House earlier this year.

Speculation had been mounting, however, that the first book, which tells the story of a teenage blogger and her relationship with a U.S. musician, was ghostwritten.

Zoe Sugg a.k.a. Zoella INSTAGRAM PHOTO

Responding to the claims on Twitter, Zoella wrote: "Everyone needs help when they try something new. The story and the characters of Girl Online are mine. I want to thank all of you who have taken the time to support the book."

A spokesman for publisher Penguin Random House confirmed Monday that "Sugg did not write Girl Online on her own."

"For her first novel, Girl Online, Zoe has worked with an expert editorial team to help her bring to life her characters and experiences in a heartwarming and compelling story," the spokesman said.

Girl Online was an instant hit, outselling the debut offerings of Harry Potter creator J. K. Rowling and Dan Brown, author of the The Da Vinci Code, as well E.L. James' bestseller Fifty Shades of Grey.

Its success even led campaigner Bob Geldof to invite Sugg to sing alongside superstars One Direction and Bono on the Band Aid 30 single released to raise money to combat Ebola.

Rumours started building that Girl Online was not Sugg's own work, however, with The Sunday Times newspaper highlighting similarities with the world of author Siobhan Curham.

In the Girl Online acknowledgements, Sugg thanks "everyone at Penguin for helping me put together my first novel, especially Amy Alward and Siobhan Curham who were with me every step of the way."

Penguin Random House said it was "proud to be have been able to help Zoe tell her story."

"As publishers our role is, and always has been, to find the very best talent and help them tell their story and connect them with readers," the spokesman added. AFP

Releases

Rowling unveils Christmas gift for Harry Potter fans

British author J.K. Rowling will publish new Harry Potter material every day from Dec. 12 to 23 on her website Pottermore.com as a gift to fans. The author made the announcement on Facebook on Monday, saying the stories will be available each day from 1 p.m. GMT for fans who solve an online riddle. The new material will include "shiny gold Galleons and even a new potion or two," the author said, and the riddles will be written in rhyme. Potter has made a few appearances this year in similar publications by the author but there are no known plans for a new book to follow after the seventh and last volume published in 2007. AFP

J.K. Rowling AFP FILE

Maisy, Pete and CC: Fun holiday tales for kids

Young readers. From cats and mice to a Santa for animals and the newest angel, these gift books will entertain children of all ages this Christmas

Looking to keep the kids entertained during long holiday car rides? Tell gift-buying elves to wrap up a book. Among this year's Christmas selections:

Board books

• **Maisy's Christmas Tree, by Lucy Cousins:** Maisy the mouse and pals Cyril and Tallulah prepare for the holiday, from trimming the tree to singing carols. One side of the book is cut out in the shape of a tree, something little ones might appreciate. Candlewick Press, ages two to five.

• **Dinosaur vs. Santa, by Bob Shea:** A smiley little dino wears a bright orange snowsuit, makes gifts for his parents and sneaks downstairs on Christmas Eve only to scurry back to bed due to someone in red ho, ho, hoing. Disney-Hyperion, ages three to five.

Cat lovers

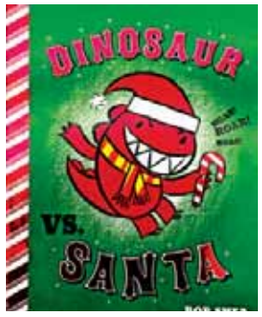
• **Pete the Cat Saves Christmas, created and illustrated by James Dean, story by Eric Litwin:** In this retelling of The Night Before Christmas, the can-do kitty is called upon to deliver gifts when Santa falls ill. The feline's "minibus flew, just like in a movie" and Pete the Cat cried, 'This is totally groovy!'" Harper, ages four to eight.

• **Here Comes Santa Cat, by Deborah Underwood, pictures by Claudia Rueda:** There are jet-pack mishaps and dead-fish gifts for children, as a wily but mute cat holding placards on sticks to communicate impersonates Santa Claus to ensure he gets a gift after a particularly naughty year. Dial Books for Young Readers, ages three to five.

Snowy books

• **Blizzard, by John Rocco:** based on Rocco's childhood experience during the blizzard of 1978, when 40 inches of snow fell on his Rhode Island town — from the first flake right before recess to delivering groceries via sled on day six and the arrival of snowplows. Disney-Hyperion, ages three to five.

• **The Animals' Santa, by Jan Brett:** Meticulously drawn forest creatures await the arrival of this special Santa. The animals recall gifts of Christmases past. There was a puzzle for the crows hanging from their tree branch and a brush to fluff his tail for the Arctic fox. A magnificent finish from the beloved Brett with a snowy owl in a starry Santa's cap and a basket full of booty strapped to his breast. G.P. Putnam's Sons, ages three to five.



Christmas spirit

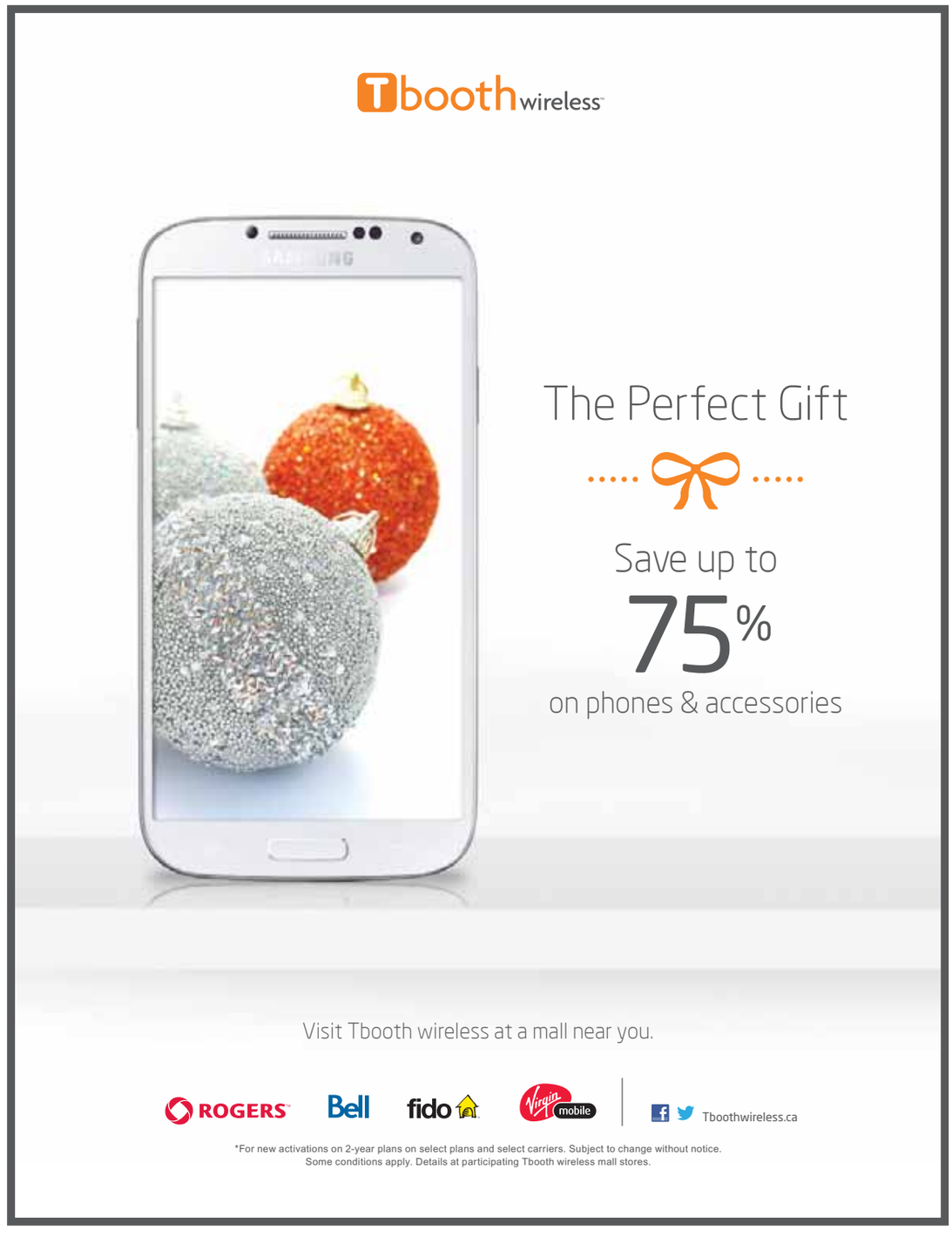
• **CC Claus: A Baseball Christmas Story, written with Ray Negron, pictures by Laura Seeley:** Yankees pitcher CC Sabathia enlists the help of George Steinbrenner and baseball stars of yore to help two boys in need of balls and gloves after their letter to Santa lands in Sabathia's fan mail. Ecco, ages five and up.

Box set

• **Puffin Hardcover Classic Box Set:** This gifty set of hardcovers with colourful, textured bindings offers a wide range of books for young readers, including A Little Princess, Anne of Green Gables, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Secret Garden, The Wind in the Willows and Peter Pan. Puffin Classics, ages eight and up. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Old meets new

Star Bright: A Christmas Story, by Alison McGhee and Peter H. Reynolds. The newest angel tries to come up with a gift for baby Jesus. She hurtles down to Earth and becomes the star that lights up the night sky. The book contrasts a futuristic heaven with old-world illustrations. Atheneum, ages four to eight.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Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Angelina Jolie ALL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

That Sony hack is the gift that keeps on giving

Now that all the personal Social Security Number and salary dust has settled from the massive Sony hack, we're starting to get down to some good dirt. And let's just put it this way: Super-producer Scott Rudin likely won't be working with Angelina Jolie again. In blistering emails back and forth with Sony chief Amy Pascal while trying to get their botched Steve Jobs biopic moving, Rudin continually bashed Jolie and her desire for a big-budget Cleopatra movie directed by David Fincher. How does Rudin really feel about Jolie? In his own words: "I'm not destroying my career over a minimally talented spoiled brat," Rudin writes. "She's a camp event and a celebrity and that's all, and the last thing anybody needs is to make a giant bomb with her that any fool could see coming. We will end up being the laughing stock of our industry and we will deserve it."

Scarlett Johansson weighs in on pregnancy

In keeping with the grand tradition of famous people procreating, new mom Scarlett Johansson has weighed in on the topic of losing weight post-pregnancy, thanks to the probing questions of Barbara Walters. And Johansson is firmly on Team Breastfeeding. "It's the best way to get back in shape," she tells Walters during a 10 Most Fascinating People of 2014 special interview. "(I do) the whole bit. I'm nursing and I love it." So there you go.

Lily Allen tweets anti-Twitter tirade

Lily Allen is livid over gossip reports that she is "trying to grow up" and giving up alcohol. Seriously, how dare they suggest such a thing? Instead, Allen took to Twitter to suggest that we all give up … Twitter? "Let's give up social media and the Mail Online. It's killing me. That is all," Allen tweeted, though it clearly was not actually all: "I feel like we're not evolved enough to handle the Internet, psychologically. I preferred real records and newspapers with news in them. Everything was just better and nicer. We were nicer. And I wouldn't be here." Here meaning Twitter, which she thinks we should all give up. Got it.

Avril facing health issues, asks fans to pray for her

Apparently singer and former Nickelback fan Avril Lavigne's current mysterious health issues are so serious that she's letting the hashtag #PrayForAvril be a thing — and even tweeting it herself. In a Twitter direct message exchange with a fan account, Lavigne revealed, "I feel bad because I haven't been able to say anything to the fans to let them (know) why I've been absent" and, "I'm not feeling well. I'm having some health issues. So please keep me in your prayers." Following the release of the exchange, a rep for Lavigne confirmed the health issues to Billboard while clarifying that the singer is not pregnant, despite speculation.

Avril Lavigne

Kim Kardashian

And God said, Let Kim Kardashian get fat

Kim Kardashian has an interesting take on pregnancy weight — and how much time God spends thinking about her. In an interview with Elle's U.K. edition, Mrs. Kanye West says of putting on weight while pregnant: "I'd think God was doing this for a reason. He was saying: 'Kim, you think you're so hot, but look what I can do to you.' My body just went crazy. After five months I swore I'd never get pregnant again. I got so huge and it felt like someone had taken over my body."

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The Daily Dish

SHARON THURNELL ENSURES VICTORY OVER DIRTY DISHES AS OXICLEAN™ CONTEST WINNER

"We decided to give OxiClean™ a try and WOW. So impressed. It works. It cleaned the dishes and all the stuff all the others left behind. I will continue to use it"
— Sharon Thurnell

Congratulations to Sharon Thurnell of Kitchener for being our official winner of the OxiClean™ Dishwasher Products Prize Pack to keep her dishes sparkling, and a $100 gift card for all her kitchen needs. For Sharon, gone are the days of cloudy stemware and scrubbing stubborn stuck on stains. Now she can have her cake, and a clean cake pan too.

Woman finds sunshine on a cloudy day

Recent bad weather seems to have no effect on the mood of Carrie of Winnipeg or her sparkling stemware. "In months nothing took away the cloudy film,"* she told The Daily Dish. But after discovering OxiClean™ Dishwashing 2-in-1 Booster + Rinse Agent, she's found that her grey skies, and dishes, have cleared up.

*"In months nothing took away the cloudy film."**
— Carrie, Winnipeg

Dishes dealt a holiday miracle

'Twas a few weeks before dinner, and all through the kitchen, a family was very busily wishin'. Not for presents and goodies, but for their dishes to be clean. For family was coming, and cloudy spots and film were clearly seen. When to their surprise, they went to the basement, discovering OxiClean™ Extreme Power Crystals™ Dishwasher Detergent Paks and OxiClean Dishwashing 2-in-1 Booster + Rinse Agent. A quick round of washing was all that they'd need, to save time to prepare for a family to feed. How their dishes sparkled and shined in all kinds of places, it was a cleaning miracle you could see on this family's faces.

*All stories depicted within this advertisement are fictional in nature. *Quotes are from real consumer reviews submitted for OxiClean™ Extreme Power Crystals™ Dishwasher Detergent Paks and OxiClean™ Dishwashing 2-in-1 Booster + Rinse Agent on ChickAdvisor.com as of December 1, 2014. Reviewers received free sample.*

Clean the dirtiest dishes with OxiClean™ Dishwasher Products.

95% OF CHICKS DIG IT† ChickAdvisor.com ★★★★½

†Source: ChickAdvisor.com reviews for OxiClean™ Extreme Power Crystals™ Dishwasher Detergent Paks. Percent of chicks who "dig it" as of December1, 2014. Reviewers received free sample.

Available at Walmart on Rollback 4.97 each

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Be the hostess with the mostess

Tips. Host the perfect party this holiday season

Try to prepare as many dishes beforehand so you can enjoy your own party. SHUTTERSTOCK

TERESA CHIYKOWSKI
For Metro

With Christmas only a couple of weeks away, the year's biggest party season has kicked into full gear.

If you are planning to play host or hostess this year, you will want to keep stress levels low by starting your party prep now. After all, you know how the expression goes — "failing to plan is planning to fail." And who likes to be stressed out before the holidays?

Failure won't be an option if you plan ahead. So how do you plan the perfect cocktail holiday party and be known among friends and colleagues as the hostess with the mostess?

Here are eight tips to help you out:

1 Manage your guest list. Make sure you don't go overboard when deciding who to invite. Keep numbers manageable, between 15 and 20 people, depending on the size of your space, of course.

2 Plan your menu. According to chef Michael Blackie of Next restaurant and catering in Ottawa, you should plan for a maximum of 20 pieces per person. Blackie also suggests making three "touch dishes," appetizers that only require you to use three ingredients.

3 Deck the halls. Decorating your space is something you can do well ahead of time. Decide on your theme and colours and go from there. Magazines or websites have plenty of great ideas for making your home festive for the holidays.

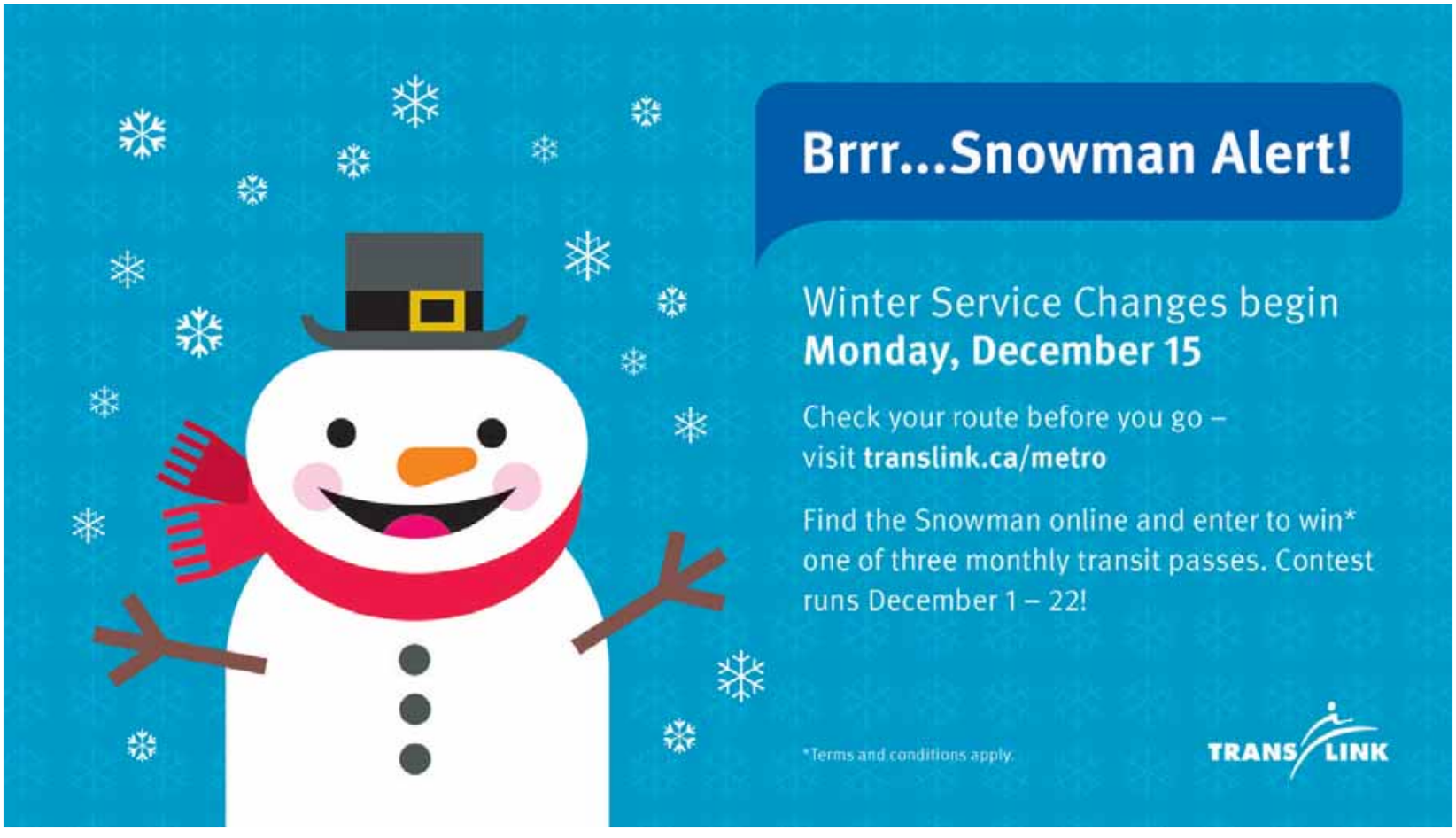
4 Prepare as many dishes as possible ahead of time. No one wants to be up to their elbows in pâté and meatballs when guests are arriving.

5 Hire a professional cleaner. Avoid the mad scramble to make your house immaculate before your party. If you don't usually have help cleaning your house, treat yourself this one time.

6 Hire a teenager to help you serve and clean up. Why spend your precious time serving and clearing dishes when you can hire a friend's son or daughter to help? You will appreciate the extra set of hands and your young helper will welcome the extra cash during the holidays.

7 Practise responsible partying. 'Tis the season to raise a glass and toast to the holidays. Make sure you have non-alcoholic choices such as soft drinks, juice, water, and coffee for your guests. Ensure there are designated drivers so partiers arrive home safe and sound.

8 Enjoy your own party. The more prepared and less stressed you are, the more you will be able to mingle. If you are stuck in the kitchen all evening, you really can't be considered the hostess with the mostess — can you?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TRANSLINK

Feast on these perfect pairings

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

Even if you know your way around a wine glass, finding that perfect bottle to pour at your holiday feast can still be as frustrating as trying to catch Santa coming down the chimney.

This time of year my food and wine pairing advice is to see the big picture. Look beyond what you think will be the focal point of the meal and consider how all those tasty seasonal side dishes and trimmings will mingle with the main course.

To help make your Christmas dinner merry, I have chosen some popular holiday entrées and foolproof wines to match.

Look at the big picture when pairing food and wine. SHUTTERSTOCK

TURKEY

Like Beyoncé at the Grammy awards, the big bird travels with a substantial entourage. Lacklustre served by his lonesome, Tom turkey begs to be draped with gravy and share a plate with stuffing, veggies and cranberry sauce so he can shine.

Look for wines with bright fruit and acidity, while avoiding those bone-dry or oaky. Think Riesling and Sauvignon blanc in whites and Pinot noir, Gamay and French Rhône blends in reds.

Relax 2013 Riesling (Germany, $11.95-$14.49): An off-dry Riesling with a light backbone of sugar that's a perfect foil for any of your sweeter sides.

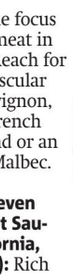
Kim Crawford 2013 Sauvignon blanc (New Zealand, $19.95-$22.99): Loads of gooseberry and bright green fruit with a zesty finish.

Belle Glos 2013 Meiomi Pinot noir (California, $26.95-$29.99): Its thick, lip-smacking, berry-laden body works magic with a cornucopia of eatables, especially the earthiness of mushroom-themed dressing.

Louis Jadot 2012 Beaujolais-Villages (France, $18.95-$21.79): Gamay-based with a soft, fleshy flavour trail that really comes alive when given a slight chill.

PRIME RIB ROAST

This new year's staple is a trendy alternative to turkey on Dec. 25. With fewer sides to consider, the focus becomes the meat in your mouth. Reach for a bottle of muscular Cabernet Sauvignon, a Merlot-led French Bordeaux blend or an Argentinean Malbec.



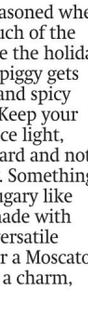
J. Lohr 2012 Seven Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon (California, $21.95-$25.99): Rich and gutsy with ample depth and a mouthful of personality.

Christian Moueix 2009 Merlot (France, $16.95-$21.99): Super smooth with layers of cassis and cherry.

Catena Zapata 2012 Catena Malbec (Argentina, $18.45-$22.99): A meat lover's red with up-front black fruit and a backbone of peppery spice.

HAM

Lightly seasoned when served much of the year, come the holidays this little piggy gets its sweet and spicy glaze on. Keep your wine choice light, fruit-forward and not too boozy. Something slightly sugary like a white made with the ever-versatile Riesling or a Moscato work like a charm, as would a refreshing Pinot Grigio. For a red, it's Pinot Noir time again.



Voga 2013 Moscato Frizzante (Italy, $14.65-$16.99): Soft, plush and light on alcohol with just a touch of creamy effervescence.

Santa Margherita 2013 Pinot Grigio (Italy, $17.95-$21.49): This Grigio's heftier citrus edge will work wonders if your ham is honey-glazed.

DUCK/GOOSE

Though a little Charles Dickens, both duck and goose make for a retro banquet. Their darker meat calls for a robust red with either brawny fruit character — a Zinfandel fits the bill, or the rustic charm you will find from Spain's Rioja region.

Ravenswood 2012 Vintners Series Old Vine Zinfandel (California, $17.95-$19.99): Plum, chocolate and a bushel of black fruit all supported by subtle oak.

Campo Viejo 2008 Rioja Reserva (Spain, $17.95-$22.99): Old-school elegance packed with dark cherry, cedar and exotic spice.

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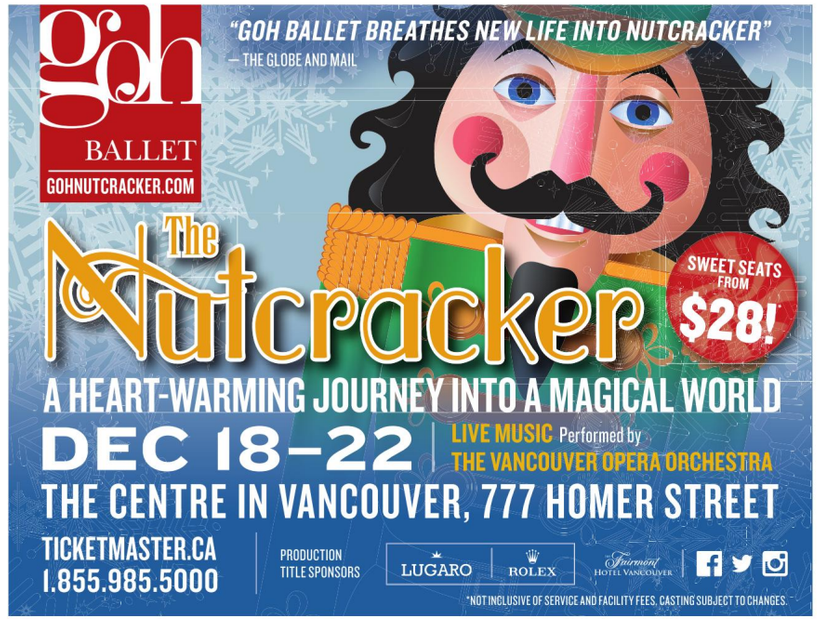

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Meet Imaan Hammam, the newest Victoria's Secret model

Style. The Dutch model shares the 'cheesy' secret to her homeland's catwalk success at this season's lingerie show

Imman Hammam struts her stuff during the Victoria's Secret fashion show at Earls Court on December 2, 2014 in London, England. The full show aired on CBS Tuesday night. GETTY IMAGES

"Yeah, there's a lot of energy and fun here — and I love London," beamed Imaan Hammam amongst the hubbub of the Victoria's Secret hair and makeup area.

The 18-year-old was one of five Dutch girls, including the brand's contracted supermodel Doutzen Kroes, to strut alongside the other 26 models on arguably the most beautiful runway on the planet.

While being Dutch apparently helps, the stunner, who is of Moroccan-Egyptian descent, talks about her VS debut in Earls Court, London and what it takes for an 'Angel' to earn her wings.

There are quite a few Dutch girls walking in the show this year. What's your explanation for the takeover?
Yeah, five girls! I don't know … we just have good food in the Netherlands. Yeah, it's the food and the cheese.

Any cheese in particular?
Young Belegen.

Is there much camaraderie between all the Dutch natives?
Yeah, we're doing a group picture later today with Doutzen and everyone.

Has it always been your dream to walk for Victoria's Secret?
Actually when I was young, I used to watch this show every year and then two weeks ago I had the casting!

Were you nervous?
I was dead nervous. I couldn't even believe it. And then two days after, my agency called me and they were like, "You're doing the show" and I was like, "Really? No way!"

It's your first time doing Victoria's Secret, so how did it compare to other shows?
Yeah, it's the first time. You have to train a lot.

Do you now have abs of steel?
(Flexes her muscles) Yep, you have to be powerful, but also be yourself — that's what VS is about.

Did you have to change your diet?
A lot of vegetables, smoothies and plenty of water!

Are you going to let your hair down post-show?
I'm going to the after-party, then straight to my hotel room and ordering room service — hamburgers, pizza … everything. Now I need that stuff.

METRO IN NEW YORK CITY

Angelic ambitions

"You have to be powerful but also be yourself — that's what VS is about."
Imaan Hammam
Victoria's Secret model

Canadian street style

Spotted in: Toronto

Name: Saira

Age: 26

Occupation: Marketing manager

What she's wearing
Dream Monster pants, Walter Baker W18 sweater, Jon & Jen Jacket and Converse shoes.

Her inspiration
"Textures! I love wearing textures. If I have a piece of clothing that I am not sure how to wear, or what to wear it with, I will go on Pinterest or Instagram for some style ideas and inspiration."

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Trends Report

Don't let a shapeless parka be your signature style this winter; don a cape to keep you snug and stylish instead. Go online to Trends Report for inspiration to dress up your winter wardrobe and see how versatile a cape can be.

- **Online.** metronews.ca/trends-report
- **Follow** Irene on Twitter @MetroIreneK and Instagram @kuanirene
- **Photo:** Getty Images

SHOPPERS DRUG MART
SEE WHAT'S NEW... CHECK OUT OUR LATEST OFFER ON PAGE 28

Top wearable tech of 2014

2014 saw an explosion in fashionable tech, from dedicated fitness and health trackers to watches and augmented reality solutions. It also saw the luxury world sit up, take notice, and start collaborating with tech giants on a range of upmarket gadgets.

AFP

DVF Made for Glass

DVF & Google Glass

Google was, of course, one of the first on the scene when it comes to high-tech eyewear. Diane Von Furstenberg first incorporated the device into her Spring 2013 runway show to offer her fans a unique insider's perspective from the catwalk. This year, the American designer introduced five new Google Glass frame styles and eight sets of shades, all designed to create a little more fashion buzz about the wearable tech item which has had plenty of people buzzing about the potential of augmented reality.

Tory Burch & Fitbit

This year Fitbit found a stylish way to keep their fans happy. They teamed up with Tory Burch to create three pieces designed to accommodate the Fitbit Flex ($99.95, sold separately). The lineup, which was released this summer, includes silicone-printed bracelets ($38) in a choice of blue or pink, a brass fret pendant necklace ($175) and a brass hinged bracelet ($195).

Tory Burch for Fitbit pendant

Fendi's first headphones created in collaboration with Beats by Dr. Dre

Fendi & Beats

The Italian luxury brand teamed up with the now Apple-owned cult headphone brand for a line of luxurious over-ear cans, which were unveiled during the Spring/Summer 2015 menswear show in June this year. The headphones are crafted in Selleria leather and handstitched by Fendi's artisans. An ultra-luxe black crocodile leather version was also created to celebrate the launch, but the colour options include sunflower yellow, fire red, emerald green, blackboard and asphalt, all in ton-sur-ton design with the Fendi logo on the side and top.

Apple Watch

Apple's investment in fashion and luxury executives (including the former CEOs of Burberry and Yves Saint Laurent) shows its desire to be a mainstream luxury company. Also where Apple leads, others follow. Rumours about an Apple Watch have been swirling round the industry for years, now Apple is set to deliver a product, we'll see how revolutionary this technology might prove, especially with a luxury 18-Karat Apple Watch Edition model, looking to compete with high-end watchmakers.

The Apple Watch collection

Roberts nabs role as face of brand

Style. Givenchy has chosen Julia Roberts for its Spring/Summer 2015 campaign

American actress Julia Roberts is the new face of Paris-based luxury brand Givenchy for Spring/Summer 2015.

Last season Riccardo Tisci captured Erykah Badu for Givenchy; this time around the Italian designer hired Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott to photograph Oscar-winning actress Julia Roberts.

"I decided to make her more intellectual, more serious, more pure," he explained to WWD. "It's a different, fresh, new way to see Julia — really cool and urban, I think."

The 47-year-old actress was shot in black and white, wearing a lace look in one image and a slick yet boxy tuxedo in the other.

The tuxedo shot also appears in a diptych with a contrasting colour shot of a traffic cone with the Givenchy logo.

She's not the first '90s icon to appear in a major fashion campaign this season. Just last week, Madonna was unveiled as the face of Versace for Spring/Summer 2015.

AFP

Julia Roberts for Givenchy. CONTRIBUTED

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WESTJET vacations

Fast, fabulous fixes for Festivus

There are only two weeks left to spruce up your place before the big day. Here are five changes you can make that will create the biggest impact — just in the nick of time

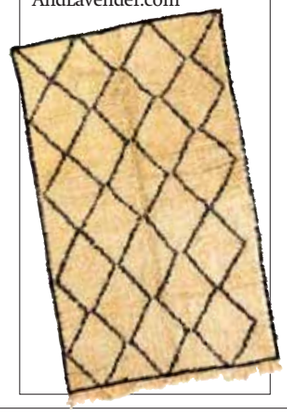
DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Dyna-light!

Hang a sculptural light fixture for uber-stylish celebrations to set a tone that will last far beyond the holidays. Eurofase's Cameo 4-Light Pendant, $1,228, Lowes.ca

Diamond in the rug

An authentic Moroccan woven rug will cozy up your seating area with its retro-warmth underfoot. Hebe Beni Ourain Berber, (5x9 feet), $1,900, Indigo-AndLavender.com



ALL PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTED

Check it out

Your bed is the largest piece of furniture to make an impact with. Buffalo Check Flannel Cover Set, from $95, Simons.ca

Curtain call

Update the smallest room in your house in the biggest way. Winter Wonderland Shower Curtain & Hook Set, $40, BedBathAndBeyond.ca

Blanket statement

A trend-setting faux fur throw looks great at the end of the bed or slung over the arm of a sofa. Grizzly Faux Fur Throw, $120, UrbanBarn.com

Through Dec. 14, with every $5 donation by Urban Barn customers, a new fleece blanket will be donated to a local homeless shelter within the community as part of the Blanket The Country In Warmth campaign.

metro marketplace

The Vancouver Marketplace is a vibrant and ever-changing landscape. Everything from fashion and shopping to self improvement and education is right outside the door.

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This recipe serves two. MAES STUDIO, INC.

As if French toast could get any better...

Waffled Chocolate-Stuffed French Toast with Whipped Butter.

An embedded layer of chocolate elevates this breakfast treat

1. Preheat the waffle iron on high. Preheat the oven on its lowest setting.

2. In a pie pan or deep dish, whisk together the eggs, milk, vanilla, and salt.

3. Place 2 slices of bread in the egg mixture and soak them until they've absorbed some of the liquid, 30 seconds. Flip the slices and soak them for another 30 seconds.

4. Coat both sides of the waffle iron grid with nonstick spray. Place a slice of soaked bread on the waffle iron and pile a little less than half of the chocolate chips on the slice. Top with the second slice of soaked bread, close the waffle iron, and cook until the bread is golden brown and the chocolate is melted, 3 to 4 minutes. There should be no trace of uncooked egg mixture.

5. Remove the French toast from the waffle iron and repeat Steps 3 and 4 to make the second batch. Place the finished French toast in the oven to keep it warm.

6. Slice the French toast into quarters. Pop open the "pocket" in each quarter and stuff the remaining chocolate chips into the opening. The residual heat will melt the chocolate.

7. Top each portion with the Whipped Butter and dust with the powdered sugar before serving.

Whipped Butter
Whipped butter adds a restaurant-quality touch to the dish. It's best to use salted butter.

1. To make whipped butter, set out the butter at room temperature for 1 hour to allow it to soften. Once it has softened, put it in a mixing bowl and beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until the butter is fluffy and slightly lighter in color, 1 minute.

RECIPE EXCERPTED FROM WILL IT WAFFLE? YES, IT WILL BY DANIEL SHUMSKI (WORKMAN PUBLISHING). COPYRIGHT © 2014.

Ingredients

French Toast
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/4 tsp pure vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt
- 4 slices bread, such as challah or brioche, cut thick
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips (semi sweet, bittersweet, or milk chocolate)
- 1 tbsp Whipped Butter (recipe follows)
- Powdered sugar, to taste

Whipped Butter
- 8 tbsp (1 stick) salted butter

Cookbook of the Week

Waffle your faves

Daniel Shumski has done all the messy work of figuring out what foods will waffle and presents his findings (53 perfected recipes) in Will It Waffle? Yes It Will!

Waffling foods other than waffles is not just a novelty but leads to great culinary innovations. For example, waffled bacon reaches perfect crispness and cooks super fast in the two-sided heat source.

Recipes in the book include Waffled Cuban Sandwich, Crisscrossed Crab Cakes, Crispy Sesame Waffled Kale, and Waffled Macaroni and Cheese. METRO

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METRO SPACES

CONTRIBUTED

Eco-friendly features integrated into design

New standards are evolving in Vancouver home design. Eco-considered, smart design and flexibility are the vanguard.

At 999 Seymour, a new collection of 134 homes by award-winning developer Townline, a lighter footprint goes hand-in-hand with comfort, practicality, and beauty.

The move-in-ready development, located at Nelson and Seymour in Vancouver's downtown core, is perfect for the urbanite looking for a next-generation home, with homes starting at $327,400.

"We're all about fulfilling the needs of the young, up-and-coming new homebuyers and residents," says Chris Colbeck, vice president of sales and marketing at Townline. "These are intelligent, forward-thinking residences that reflect the values of a modern, West Coast city lifestyle."

The integrated custom-panel Blomberg fridge and dishwasher are energy efficient and stylish. The low-E, energy-efficient window system and energy efficient, GE front-loading stacking washer and dryer provide eco-friendly convenience. The deep, wide balconies conserve energy with movable sun shields made of perforated oxidized aluminum.

Residents can take advantage of even more eco-friendly features, including a convenient Zip Car membership and a special gift for buyers — a $500 gift certificate that can be used toward buying yourself a new bike.

The homes have technology built in to suit the needs of modern business professionals. Multifunction media ports provide connections for your phone, data and cable. The only key you will need is the key to your suite. The building's personally encoded keyless access system permits entry to building lobby, elevators, garage, common areas and individual residential floors.

Esthetics were also carefully considered in the homes' designs. The development's timeless architecture, by one of North America's leading architects, Acton Ostry Architects, ensures that homebuyers get a home that's right for them now and years into the future.

Inside each home, buyers have their choice of two distinctive warm colour palettes. Underfoot, wide-plank engineered hardwood floors provide a feeling of solidity. The signature exposed concrete feature wall in most homes gives the design an edge.

Quartz countertops, a full-height backsplash, a stainless steel single-bowl under mount sink and contemporary under-cabinet and track lighting make the kitchens a pleasure to cook in.

"Our homes give modern homebuyers all the features they're looking for," says Colbeck.

The display suite at 999 Seymour is now open by appointment. Call 604-879-9996 for an appointment. Find out more at the website: 999seymour.com.

'You can walk out your door and find something fun'

The sights, flavours and fun of downtown Vancouver are at your doorstep at 999 Seymour.

"There's no postal code in Vancouver as vibrant with arts, culture and entertainment," says Chris Colbeck, vice president of sales and marketing at Townline, the developer of 999 Seymour. "You won't find a home that's more central to the action."

Many of Vancouver's favourite eateries are within a five-minute walk, including chic Italian trattoria Cibo, the newly refurbished Homer Street Cafe, poutine go-to Fritz and brunch institution the Twisted Fork, to name a small sample of the possibilities. Nightlife is always lively along the Granville strip and in nearby Yaletown. For creative cocktails made with local ingredients, take a cosy corner seat at Uva. If you're looking to hear some great new music, Venue nightclub always has someone interesting on their calendar. Catch a musical at the Vogue Theatre or the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra at the Orpheum.

There's always a great foreign or independent local film playing at the Vancity Theatre, which hosts the Vancouver International Film Festival every fall. The Contemporary Art Gallery is a lesser-known gem in Vancouver that's always showing something interesting.

Emery Barnes Park nearby is the perfect oasis to sit with a coffee and watch the world go by. And of course BC Place Stadium and Rogers Arena are always buzzing with Vancouver's biggest sports games and exhibitions.

At 999 Seymour you'll be perfectly poised to catch those elusive one-time gallery openings, pop-ups and performances in Vancouver.

"That's the beauty of living here," says Colbeck. "You don't always have to make plans. You can walk out your door and find something fun. There's a sense of spontaneity and living-in-the-moment."

Nesters and Choices markets are a short walk away, providing a wide selection of fresh, local ingredients for your next dinner party.

999 Seymour is also far enough away from major destinations to let you rest and relax.

CONTRIBUTED

ENTERTAIN IN LUXURY OR VENTURE OUT IN STYLE

Although the recreational activities around 999 Seymour abound, residents won't need to leave home to get entertained.

Invite your friends for an event at the social lounge, which features a flat-screen TV, pool table and bar kitchen — everything you'll need to keep your guests entertained and well fed.

When it's warm out, enjoy the landscaped outdoor terrace, with its open-air fire pit, lounge-style seating and barbecue.

Work out at the well-equipped gym. Meet your neighbours and do your sun salutations in the yoga and flex room.

If you're looking to venture farther out for exercise, Vancouver's downtown core offers beautiful, plentiful green space. Bike the sea wall, play a game of soccer in the park, or enjoy a stroll in the crisp winter air.

Visit the website: 999seymour.com.

DISPLAY SUITE NOW OPEN BY PRIVATE APPOINTMENT

LIVE DOWNTOWN FROM $327,400. TRANSPORTATION INCLUDED*

Don't miss this unique opportunity to own at 999 Seymour at Nelson. A select group of new urban homes are still available in the heart of downtown Vancouver, where everything is quite literally, at your door. Move in this fall for as little as 5% down.*

CALL 604.879.9996 | 999SEYMOUR.COM

* Your new home purchase at 999 Seymour includes a new urban bike and a one year membership to zipcar®

999 SEYMOUR AT NELSON

TOWNLINE

MĀC Marketing Solutions

* Prices and incentives are subject to change without notice. Purchasers will receive a $500 gift certificate to purchase a new urban bike. The Developer reserves the right to make changes or modifications to the information contained herein. Completion is estimated for Fall 2014 and subject to change. See sales rep for details. E. & O. E.

HAZEL A GREAT PLACE TO START A FAMILY

BUILDER OFFERING COMPETITIVE PRICING ON HOMES

There's no place like home. This Christmas, the best gift you can give your family is a beautiful new place to live, located in a great neighbourhood.

For new homebuyers looking for a place to grow their families, that place is Hazel, a new collection of 34 move-in-ready homes in Coquitlam.

"We're ready for residents, so there's no waiting at Hazel," says Kiran Rai, marketing director for Hazel. "If you want to, you can move in just in time for the new year."

The current selection of homes includes a full range of options for buyers, all ready now for residents who are looking to start the new year in a new home.

The one-bedroom, two-bedroom, two-bedroom-and-den, and three-bedroom homes start at $220,900 for a one-bedroom, and the three-bedrooms start at $350,900.

"We're very happy to be able offer such a great price for our buyers," says Rai. "You won't find a better-priced three-bedroom home in this area."

Spending time together is easy in a Hazel home. The open-concept plans let conversations (and interior design plans) flow easily from one space into the next.

"Hazel homes were designed to allow residents to make their own calls with the decorating and layout," says Rai. The nine-foot ceilings and open plans provide a blank canvas that residents can make their own. "There's lots of room to play with."

The homes' high-quality building materials and finishes make them warm and inviting when you step in the door. Wide-plank laminate flooring in the entryway, kitchen, living, and dining rooms are easy to clean and design-smart. Cosy carpeting makes the bedrooms feel like home.

The spacious balconies and patios differentiate Hazel from other condos in the area — every single home at Hazel has one. In the winter, it's a great place to get a breath of fresh air, and in the summer, you'll be glad to have a place to enjoy your morning coffee, cultivate kitchen herbs and host a barbecue.

"The balconies and patios at Hazel are quite generous," says Rai. "They're designed as functional spaces to entertain guests."

When the party heads indoors, residents will also be able to show off their beautiful kitchens. Make a polished impression with sleek, wood-grain laminate cabinetry, three-centimetre slab quartz countertops, porcelain high gloss backsplash tiles, stainless steel appliances and under-cabinet accent lighting.

The stainless steel undermount double bowl sink with contemporary single lever faucet and chrome pull-out spray make the kitchens feel clean and modern.

"Hazel is ready for cooking, entertaining and relaxing this Christmas," says Rai. "They're designed to be lived in."

The Hazel sales centre and display home are now open daily from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. (except Fridays). Visit at #104 - 827 Roderick Ave., Coquitlam. Find out more at liveathazel.com or call 604-937-2599.

Schools, parks and recreation centres close by

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Coquitlam's beautiful green space and tight-knit community are the perfect new home for families.

This Christmas, a home at Hazel, a new collection of move-in-ready condos in Coquitlam, will make homebuyers part of a festive community.

Hazel is green all year round with its lush landscaping. The on-site children's play area gives families a place to take the kids any time.

Kids will fit right in with Alderson Elementary right across the street, and École Banting Middle School not far off.

"Hazel is a great focal point for families that want a place where they can grow," says Kiran Rai, marketing director for Hazel.

"Parents will find lots of opportunities for education, recreation and relaxation nearby."

There's no excuse not to be outdoorsy in Coquitlam, with the city's many parks and hikes at your fingertips.

The Vancouver Golf Club and Blue Mountain Park nearby give kids and adults lots of activities to enjoy. Poirier Sport and Leisure Complex has lots of fitness and outdoor programs for kids, including swimming, skating, curling, dance classes and more. This Christmas, new buyers can enjoy the recreation centre's seasonal activities and programs, including holiday camps for kids.

The Burnaby Public Library Cameron branch is easily accessible nearby, and full of engaging learning opportunities for kids. Public transit is easily accessible, too, allowing residents to get across the Lower Mainland quickly via the nearby Braid Sky-Train station. If you're driving, Lougheed Highway and the Trans-Canada Highway will take you to SFU on Burnaby Mountain or BCIT in a heartbeat.

3 YEARS, NO FEES

This Christmas, get a special incentive when you buy a home at Hazel. The first five homebuyers who purchase their home before Christmas will get three years with zero strata fees.

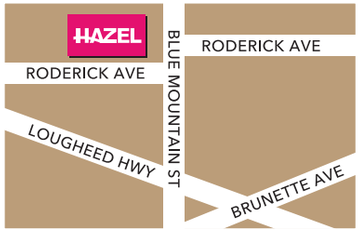
"It's our way of giving back to our homebuyers," explains Kiran Rai, marketing director for Hazel. "We understand that our buyers are looking for a long-term investment that they can grown in. This extra boost will help families and buyers make the most of the first three years in their new home."

Promotions, prices and availability subject to change without notice. Certain conditions apply. See a sales representative for details.

THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

Hazel is the place... and NOW is the right time to move right in. Hazel is about access to everything you need: Schools, Parks, Freeways and Skytrains. Hazel is about 3 bedroom homes for families and large one bedroom homes for those with busy careers.

Hazel is about you and definitely worth a look.



Presentation Centre & Display Home
#104 - 827 Roderick Ave, Coquitlam
Open Daily 12-5pm (except Fridays)
604.937.2599
www.LiveAtHazel.com

Developed by:

PHOENIX HOMES

Sales & Marketing by:

MACDONALD REALTY
PLATINUM PROJECT MARKETING

The developer reserves the right to make modifications to the information contained herein. Promotions, prices and availability are subject to change without notice. See a Sales Representative for more details. E. & O.E.

CONTRIBUTED

Resort-style pampering at Park Ave.

Park Avenue WEST spares no details

Some people fly to Maui to relax. Others find luxury closer to home.

When you're living at Park Avenue WEST, by Concord Pacific, all you'll need to do is take the elevator to find resort-style pampering and world-class amenities.

"It's wonderful to travel and feel pampered in a fine hotel," says Isaac Chan, sales director at Concord Pacific. "Park Avenue WEST is like that fine hotel, except you get those perks every day."

Park Avenue WEST is the newest addition to the master-planned Park Place Community in Surrey's city centre.

Club PA, Park Avenue WEST's exclusive amenities space, will bring residents that resort-style feel. Its outdoor swimming pool and private, resort-inspired cabanas will leave you and your guests feeling relaxed and refreshed.

The pool house offers an entertainment kitchen, hot tub, steam room and sauna. The entertainment lounge and karaoke media room will give you a place to gather until well after the sun sets.

Take in breathtaking views of the city lights at Park Avenue WEST's sky garden.

When you're refreshed from relaxing and ready to get some exercise, Park Avenue WEST has extensive recreation amenities, too. Stay fit and have fun at the private tennis court, yoga pavilion, putting green, and fully-equipped, state-of-the-art fitness gym. Have fun and keep your golf swing sharp in the club's exclusive golf simulator.

Luxury is also in your surroundings and accessibility. Park Avenue WEST is also a great jumping-off point to enjoy everything the vibrant centre of Surrey has to offer. The homes are a short walk from Park Place Plaza, SFU Surrey Campus and Central City Shopping Centre, which has 130 shops and services.

While you're out, stop for a craft beer at Surrey's own Central City brew pub.

When residents want to get across the city, King George SkyTrain Station is just steps away and gets you into Vancouver in less than 40 minutes.

High-end features and lots of choice

CONTRIBUTED

Home means comfort and beauty at Park Avenue WEST.

"We designed the residences here to provide our buyers with the best," says Isaac Chan, sales director at Concord Pacific. Homes at Park Avenue WEST come standard with the finishes you might find in a luxury hotel.

Quality is apparent from the moment Park Avenue WEST residents step inside their door. Four relaxing colour schemes — Impression, Reflection, Manhattan and Hamptons — are available for buyers to choose from, providing a serene backdrop to however residents decide to decorate.

High-end features include the wide-plank flooring, carpet and marble tile flooring, under-cabinet LED lighting, engineered quartz countertop, marble tile backsplash, and soft-close cabinetry with open glass display shelving. Park Avenue WEST offers 250 homes under $250,0000 with one-bedroom homes starting from just the $190,000s.

"The value at Park Avenue WEST is outstanding," says Chan. "Buyers can have high-end homes and excellent quality of life at an achievable price that's great for a range of buyers — from first-time buyers to young families and downsizers."

Kitchens are elegant and modern with a European-styled integrated appliance package, including a bottom-mount, counter-depth panel fridge to match the cabinetry, a hood fan, dishwasher, gas cooktop, wall oven and microwave. Every home comes with a stackable front-load washer and dryers, which give residents maximal convenience with a minimal footprint in the square footage. Hotel-style finishings continue into the bathroom, which has sleek engineered quartz countertops, an undermount sink with a polished chrome Kohler faucet, and large marble-tile flooring and shower surrounds.

"We went for simple and high quality in the design," says Chan.

Open balconies or terraces for the suites make the perfect place for a barbecue.

For more info, visit parkavenueliving.ca.

CHRISTMAS FUN

The holidays are upon us and during the month of December the Park Avenue WEST sales centre is holding a series of fun events for the community.

For the Surrey Transformation Selfie Tour, Concord Pacific invites visitors to go to three of five listed locations, snap a photo, and show it to our sales staff for a $1,000 exploration package. Also, receive up to $8,000 in incentives for the holiday season.

The Park Avenue WEST sales centre is also now hosting the City Centre Gingerbread Contest, inviting eight local elementary schools to build the City of Surrey as they envision it will become — in gingerbread! Each participating school receives $1,000, with the most popular one receiving an extra $2,000 for after-school programs. Voting runs from now until Dec 19. Elementary schools need your vote.

And don't miss our Tom Lee Music Festival on Dec. 20 from 2 to 5 p.m. Enjoy a day of musical performances and be with us as we announce the winner to the Concord City Centre Gingerbread Bakeoff.

Drop into the Park Avenue WEST Sales Centre for more information about our dynamic development.

PARK AVENUE WEST MONTH OF FESTIVITIES

CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS WITH PARK AVENUE WEST! COME DOWN TO OUR SALES CENTRE IN SURREY & ENJOY A FULL MONTH OF FESTIVITIES & INCENTIVES:

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS & TREE DECEMBER 1 - 31

Take a family portrait in front of thousands of elegant lights or inside our centre with a large festive Christmas tree.

CITY CENTRE GINGERBREAD DECEMBER 6 - 31 12:00 - 6:00 PM

Vote to Benefit Local Schools!

View the city centre of Surrey in gingerbread style, as local students complete to win a grand prize benefitting their school. Be sure to vote for your favourite gingerbread city by Dec 19.

Elementary Schools Need Your Help!

Visit our sales centre before Dec 19th and vote for your favourite gingerbread city, benefiting after school programs

TOM LEE MUSIC FESTIVAL DECEMBER 20, SAT 2:00 - 5:00 PM

Enjoy all day performances presented by Tom Lee Music, as we announce the winning school for the Concord City Centre Gingerbread Bakeoff.

SURREY TRANSFORMATION SELFIE TOUR DECEMBER 1 - 31 12:00 - 6:00 PM

Special Exploration Package for the Holidays

Explore the city, take a selfie, and for a limited time only, receive an exploration package of over $1000.

HOLIDAY SPECIAL: UP TO $8000 MAJOR PURCHASER INCENTIVES DECEMBER 1 - 31

As a holiday special, receive up to $8,000 in incentives when you purchase a home at Park Avenue WEST!

SURREY'S LARGEST URBAN COMMUNITY
250 HOMES UNDER $250,000
SURREY SALES CENTRE:
9908 KING GEORGE BLVD. (NEXT TO KING GEORGE SKYTRAIN STATION)
OPEN DAILY, 12PM - 6PM
ParkAvenueLiving.ca
604.583.9866

Actual suite interiors, exteriors and views may be noticeably different than what is depicted in photographs and renderings. The developer reserves the right to make modifications, substitutions, change brands, sizes, colours, layouts, materials, ceiling heights, features, finishes and other specifications without prior notification. Such details are governed by the applicable offer to purchase and agreement of sale, and disclosure statement. This is not an offering for sale. Any such offering can only be made with the applicable offer to purchase and agreement of sale and disclosure statement. E&OE. Concord Park Avenue Project Limited Partnership

CONCORD PACIFIC

FAMILY FUN GUIDE

BY STEPHANIE ORFORD

Where to go, what to do and how to get there. Here are this week's activity listings

CHRISTMAS AT CANADA PLACE

Celebrate the season alongside a jaw-dropping view of the North Shore Mountains with Christmas crafts, letters to Santa, the Avenue of Christmas Trees and Rudolph's Theatre. Dec. 13 - 31 at the Canada Place West Promenade. Open noon-6 p.m. daily. Free admission. Visit canadaplace.ca or portmetrovancouver.com for more.

ITALIAN FARMERS' MARKET

Celebrate Christmas, Italian-style, with paper art, cooking demonstrations, ornament making, singing and dancing, and a performance of Belfana's Star, a traditional Italian Christmas story. Dec. 13 from 3 p.m.- 8 p.m. at the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts in Burnaby. Free. Go to burnaby.ca for more.

PEACHY KEEN

Ever dream of riding inside a gargantuan floating peach? You will after watching this theatrical rendition of James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl. Runs Dec. 6 – Jan. 4 at the Waterfront Theatre on Granville Island. Tickets $24 for adults, $12 for youth (6+). Go to carouseltheatre.ca/production/james for more.

CHRISTMAS MARKET

Walk through a traditional German village at Christmas. Join the scavenger hunt, ride the Christmas carousel, decorate gingerbread, and enjoy German treats. Open until Dec. 24, daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. at Queen Elizabeth Plaza. $3-$7 per person. Free for kids 6 and under. For more, visit vancouverchristmasmarket.com.

VAN DJANGO BELLS

Shake up your holiday music this year with this Gypsy-jazz quartet. Pop, sing-alongs and jazz favourites… Christmas music has never been spunkier. Dec. 16, 7:30 p.m. at Presentation House in North Vancouver. Tickets: $16-$20. Go to vandjango.com for more.

ALL ABOARD

Take the Bright Nights Christmas Train in Stanley Park. Experience lights (there are more than three million lights along the way), breathtaking displays and live performers. Until Jan. 4, 2015. Stanley Park Train Plaza. Tickets: $6-11. Free for children under 2. Book ahead. Go to brightnights.ca for more.

"Someday I'd like to play on Team Canada." – *Madison, age 8*

Every kid has a someday. It may be something fantastical like flying to the moon, something practical like following their dad into construction or something we all can relate to like wanting to be surrounded by love. No matter what it is, we want to give them the support they need to get there. That's why we're pledging $100 million over five years to help over a million children do just that. Let's make every kid's someday™ happen.

RBC Kids Pledge

RBC®

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MLS

Whitecaps lose Ballouchy in expansion draft

The Vancouver Whitecaps lost midfielder Mehdi Ballouchy to the New York City FC in the Major League Soccer expansion draft on Wednesday.

Ballouchy, who made three starts and played nine games last season for the Whitecaps, was selected in the sixth round by the newest New York club.

The Whitecaps selected Ballouchy in Stage 2 of the 2013 MLS re-entry draft last December. After Ballouchy was selected, the Whitecaps protected midfielder Nicolas Mezquida, meaning he could no longer be selected in the expansion draft.

On Tuesday, the Whitecaps declined the option on Mezquida's contract.

CAM TUCKER/METRO

NBA

Wiggins leads T-Wolves' upset of Trail Blazers

Andrew Wiggins had 23 points, 10 rebounds and four assists and the Minnesota Timberwolves stunned the Portland Trail Blazers with a 90-82 victory on Wednesday night.

Corey Brewer had 19 points, eight rebounds, five assists and five steals for the Timberwolves, who snapped a six-game losing streak and won for just the third time since Ricky Rubio went out with an injured ankle on Nov. 7. They out-rebounded Portland 56-38 to overcome four key players being out with injuries. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nucks face adversity upon return home

NHL. Rest on the agenda for road-weary team that has lost its last three games

CAM TUCKER
cam.tucker@metronews.ca

Three straight losses and the Vancouver Canucks are suddenly facing a spot of adversity, really for the first time under this new management and coaching staff.

The Canucks returned home from their seven-game road trip, which concluded with a 3-3-1 record after losses in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. It had the makings of a great trip, after Vancouver shut out Sidney Crosby and the Pittsburgh Penguins last week.

It didn't finish that way.

The Canucks, who host the New York Rangers on Saturday as the beginning of a four-game homestand, didn't skate Wednesday. They're not scheduled to skate Thursday. The fatigue was all too evident in the Canucks' final two games on the road. They were out of gas, and had it not been for the goaltending of Eddie Lack in Ottawa and Ryan Miller in Montreal, they would have been steamrolled, as opposed to being in a position to compete for at least a single point.

And they're dealing with injuries, too.

The Canucks miss Dan Hamhuis, the steady presence that is out due to a lower-body injury suffered on Nov. 20, on the blue-line.

They've also missed Shawn Matthias in the two games he's been out since taking a head shot from Stephane Robidas in Toronto. He had been playing his best hockey of the season, and his best hockey in a Canucks uniform since the Roberto Luongo trade.

But the second line of Nick Bonino, Alex Burrows and Chris Higgins has also gone cold. They were split up Tuesday in Montreal.

Bonino, acquired for Ryan Kesler at the 2013 NHL Draft, hasn't scored in 15 games. Burrows and Higgins have been held off the scoresheet entirely in each of their last six games.

It will be interesting to see if head coach Willie Desjardins decides to keep them apart for this homestand, considering how well the trio has been as a driver of puck possession. All three players have a Corsi for rating well above 50 per cent at Rogers Arena.

Follow Cam Tucker on Twitter @camtucker_metro

The Canucks' Nick Bonino gets caught in between Canadiens Michael Bournival, left, and P.K. Subban on Tuesday night in Montreal. The Canadiens beat the Canucks 3-1. PAUL CHIASSON/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

Home sweet home

The Canucks bring a 7-3-1 record at Rogers Arena into their four-game homestand:

- Saturday vs. Rangers
- Dec. 17 vs. Stars
- Dec. 20 vs. Flames
- Dec. 22 vs. Coyotes

Seahawks cornerback Tharold Simon intercepts a pass intended for Eagles receiver Riley Cooper on Sunday in Philadelphia. ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

Seahawks CBs playing shutdown D

Tharold Simon never started a game in his NFL career until Week 7 of this season when he finally got to line up opposite Richard Sherman in Seattle's secondary.

Simon was fully aware of what that meant: lots of passes were about to be thrown his way.

"It's actually fun. You want to get challenged and that's the big thing about it. You don't want to go out there and be bored," Simon said.

"(Sherman) likes to be challenged, too, every day. That's fun when you go out there and you know they won't challenge him too much. It just gives you more of an opportunity to go out there and show the people what you can do, show yourself, your coaches what you can do out there and go out there and have fun."

Quoted

"Every corner we have in here, every DB, it's just greatness in that room. Everybody is absorbed in that room because we really love what we're doing, we love the environment." Seahawks free safety Earl Thomas

Sherman will always receive the majority of the attention in Seattle's secondary. But the unwillingness of quarterbacks to challenge Sherman this season — beginning with the opener against Green Bay — has created opportunities for Simon and Byron Maxwell to show off their skills.

So far, they've matched what's become the standard set by Seattle's talented secondary, helping the Seahawks have the No. 1 pass defence in the NFL.

According to STATS, Sherman and Maxwell have been targeted 57 times each this season, but combined they've allowed only one touchdown. Simon has yet to give up a touchdown pass either.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

4 SPORTS

AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Make the most of today's positive influences to start something new. This is a great time for career maters and also for affairs of the heart.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You will have to make sacrifices over the next few days but that's OK. You will get your reward later in the month when the Sun moves in your favour.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Let others know what you think and feel, especially if you think you're out of your depth and feel you could use some help.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You may come into money over the next few days — and it's possibble that you will spend it all in record quick time! Mars in the wealth area of your chart warns others won't be pleased by your extravagance.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Put your needs first today and don't feel guilty about it. Some people may say you are selfish, and maybe you are, but what of it? You have desires and every right to satisfy them.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Don't let work get on top of you. There are many ways you can make life easier and the most obvious is to stop pushing yourself so hard. Everything will get done in its own time.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Some of the people you meet today and tomorrow could be important to you professionally or financially in the future, so be on your best behavior.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Look and act confident today, even though you may not feel it. If your rivals detect fear they will be after you in an instant.

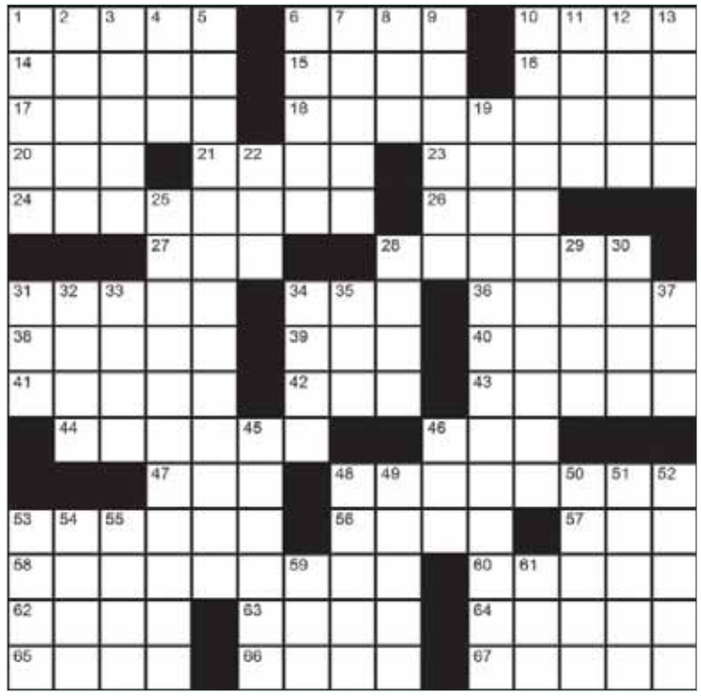
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Mercury in your sign fills your head with lots of ideas, but how do you decide which are good and which are bad? You don't have to decide immediately. Note your ideas down and come back to them later.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The most important thing now is that you get your financial house in order and cut back on activities that waste your time and money.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
If others have power over you it is only because you have given them that power — and it is in your power to take it back. Be forceful today but don't be emotional about it.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
The more others say what you're trying to do is impossible the more determined you'll be to prove them wrong. Your confidence may waver but you should reach your goal.

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



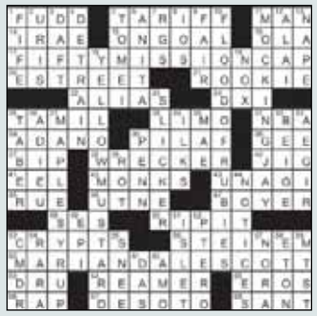
Across

1. "I am the walrus / Goo goo _'__." - The Beatles
6. Streetside serving
10. Designer Vera
14. Leader
15. Mr. Gruffudd
16. Ancient instrument
17. Canadian filmmaker Mr. Brassard
18. "Boom Goes the Dynamite" Toronto rapper
20. Particular pan
21. Janis' comical hubby
23. "It's on me!": 2 wds.
24. Ontario's 'cow' village
26. Beirut's locale [abbr.]
27. "Really?" remarks
28. Montreal 'river'
31. Tony __, "The Commish" character
34. __ Fighters
36. Tine
38. Keyboard instrument
39. Deli serving
40. George Fox's "_ __ You My Word"
41. Old 'town' in France
42. Whichever
43. Kira __, "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine" character
44. Nut kind
46. Farming, briefly
47. Poet's 'far'
48. Sir John A. Macdonald burial city
53. Compete in the WWE, colloquially
56. CCR tune
57. "Sheila" singer Tommy
58. Squash sort
60. Astound
62. Stick _ __ in the lake
63. "__ _ minute?"
64. Appointed
65. Rove
66. Canadian artist Mr. Gaucher
67. __-turvy

Down

1. __ paper
2. Madrid's month-after-May
3. Taco kit brand, with Paso: 2 wds.
4. Poet's 'above'
5. Arctic: 'Aglu' is a __ __ made by seals in the ice
6. Manitoba town; or, 'Lord of the Rings' role
7. "I'll see __ __ Friday, then?"
8. Sprinted
9. Playwright Eugene
10. Restaurant for actors Donnie and Mark, and their chef brother Paul, with a new location in Toronto
11. Take _ __ (Drink some)
12. Songstress Ms. Hendryx
13. Stone hue
19. Landform viewed from Thunder Bay so-named because of its outline: 2 wds.
22. CV
25. The what includes Earth and Jupiter?: 2 wds.
28. Conniving
29. __ dire (Questioning process of prospective jurors)
30. Jealousy
31. Bawl
32. Dundee's li'l animal
33. Water: Spanish
34. Imperfection
35. 'Ball' suffix
37. Some stoves
45. Get-up-and-go
46. Plus
48. 1971 Donald Sutherland movie
49. Wee bits
50. The __, Charlie Chaplin's persona
51. Seepages
52. Dependent
53. Double _ __ Ranch (Setting on "The Roy Rogers Show")
54. Prefix to 'matic'
55. Plato's promenade
59. Pre-Dec. month
61. Chairman in "Revolution"

Yesterday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

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Yesterday's Sudoku

7	3	5	1	9	4	2	8	6
4	6	9	8	2	3	5	1	7
2	1	8	7	6	5	4	3	9
5	4	7	2	3	9	8	6	1
9	8	6	4	1	7	3	2	5
3	2	1	5	8	6	7	9	4
1	9	4	3	7	2	6	5	8
8	5	3	6	4	1	9	7	2
6	7	2	9	5	8	1	4	3

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